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Southwell
ZIM

SOUTHWELL'S WORKS.

Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears ;

The Triumphs ober Death ;

AND

An Epistle of Comfort ;

&c.

BY THE
REV. ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

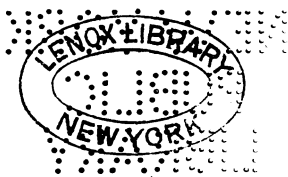
EDITED
BY **W. JOS. WALTER,**

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1822.



PREFACE,
BY THE EDITOR.

IN the Volume here presented to the Public, the Editor has the pleasure of performing a promise made in his Reprint of the Poems of Southwell. The patronage with which that attempt at republication was honoured, has encouraged him to give a second volume, containing the *published* works in Prose, of the same Author. Should equal success attend the present, as the former undertaking, it is the Editor's intention to give a third volume, containing an *unpublished* work of Southwell, entitled, 'Meditations on the Love of God;' a MS. of which some account, with accompanying extracts, was given in the Life of this writer, prefixed to the Reprint of his Poems.

Of the three Pieces contained in this volume, the Editor can have but little to say, as the beauties they exhibit in every page sufficiently speak for themselves. Of 'Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears,' a judicious critic in the Retrospective Review, (No. 8.) remarks, that 'though written in prose, it is much more fervid and impassioned than the greater part of his poetry. Southwell seems almost afraid to trust himself in the fairy land of poetry, lest he should imbibe some of its

PREFACE.

illusions. The consequence is, that, in his poetical pieces, his genius is much more restrained than in his prose compositions. While the former are, in general, marked by gentleness and simplicity; the latter are characterised by energy and passion.'

The Epistle, entitled, 'The Triumphs over Death,' was composed on the death of the Lady Margaret, wife of the Honourable Robert Sackville, son and heir apparent of Thomas, then Lord Buckhurst, whom he succeeded as second Earl of Dorset, in 1608. She was daughter of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, by Margaret, his second wife, daughter of Thomas Lord Audley, of Walden, sister to Thomas, afterwards first Earl of Suffolk. 'In what a beautiful strain of panegyric,' says the author of the article, *Southwell*, in the *Censura Lituraria*, 'are these Triumphs written! The pen of the master, and the gifts of the muse, flow in unison to delineate the character of the deceased Margaret, and little has the mould of age affected it!'

But the 'Epistle of Comfort,' is the masterpiece of *Southwell's* pen. It is written in a strain of fervid eloquence, with wonderful vigour of thought and strength of language. From an observation at page 194, it appears to have been written in 1584, consequently when the author was only 22, and on the very year he arrived in England, and entered upon the duties of his arduous and perilous mission; 'having,' to use his own words, 'travelled far, and brought home a freight

PREFACE.

of spiritual substance, to enrich my brethren, and medicinal receipts against their ghostly maladies.' There is something very striking in the picture of this youthful Missionary, who, while his brethren of the priesthood are falling around him, stands courageously forward to exhort them to constancy; pointing to the palm of martyrdom, and urging them to grasp the prize. 'Hoary senses,' says he, in language at once simple and affecting,—'hoary senses are often couched under youthful locks, and some are riper in the spring, than others in the autumn of their age. A true Elias can conceive that a little cloud may cast a large and abundant shower; and the Scripture teacheth us, that God unveileth to little ones, that which he concealeth from the wisest sages: for his truth is not abashed by the minority of the speaker.'

For a first sight of the rare volume containing this Epistle, the Editor is indebted to the kindness of Mr. Southey, the Poet Laureate. It was in a literary circle, at his charming and hospitable mansion on the banks of the Derwent, that he kindly indulged the writer, by pointing out many of its beauties, and reading several extracts, but particularly the Introduction, on which he dwelt with peculiar delight. Indeed, he seemed entirely to concur with the sentiments of Sir Egerton Brydges, who observes, that 'a deep moral pathos, illumined by fervent piety, marked every thing Southwell wrote, either in prose or verse. There is

PREFACE.

something singularly simple, chaste, eloquent and fluent, in his diction on all occasions.'—It is but justice to add, that it is to Mr. Southey's observations the Editor is indebted for the first idea of republishing the works of this once popular, (*), but now neglected author; and he is proud of this opportunity of acknowledging the obligation.

(*) It is remarked in the *Censura Literaria*, that the works of Southwell, ' must have been very popular, from the numerous editions [above twenty] that were printed; and yet, at this day, few of his productions are to be met with.'

MARY MAGDALEN'S

Funeral Tears.

To the Worshipful and Virtuous Gentlewoman,

MISTRESS A. D.

MADAM,

YOUR virtuous requests, to which your deserts gave the force of a commandment, won me to satisfy your devotion in penning some little Discourse of the blessed Mary Magdalen. And among other glorious examples of this Saint's life, I have made choice of her Funeral Tears, in which as she most uttered the great vehemency of her fervent love to Christ, so hath she given therein largest scope to dilate upon the same—a theme pleasing, I hope, unto yourself, and fittest for the time. For as passion, and especially this of love, is in these days the chief commander of most men's actions, and the idol to which both tongues and pens do sacrifice their ill-bestowed labours; so there is nothing now more needful to be treated, than how to direct these humours into their due courses, and to draw this flood of affections into the right channel.—Passions I allow, and loves I approve; only I would wish that men would alter their object, and better their intent: for Passions being sequels of our nature,

and allotted unto us as the handmaid's of Reason, there can be no doubt but as their Author is good, and their end godly, so their use, tempered in the mean, implieth no offence.

Love is but the infancy of true Charity, yet sucking Nature's breast, and swathed in her bands ; which then groweth to perfection, when Faith, besides natural motives, proposeth higher and nobler grounds of amity. Hatred and Anger are the necessary officers of Prowess and Justice ; Courage being cold and dull, and Justice, in due revenge, slack and careless, where hate of the fault will not make it odious, and Anger setteth not an edge on the sword that punisheth or preventeth wrongs. Desire and Hope are the parents of Diligence and Industry ; the nurses of Perseverance and Constancy ; the seeds of Valour and Magnanimity ; the death of Sloth, and the breath of all Virtue.— Fear and Dislikes are the scouts of Discretion, the harbingers of Wisdom and Policy, killing idle Repentance in the cradle, curbing Rashness with deliberation.— Audacity is the armour of Strength, and the guide of Glory, breaking the ice to the hardest exploits, and crowning Valour with honourable victory.— Sorrow is the sister of Mercy, and a maker of compassion ; weeping with others' tears, and grieved with their harms. It is both the salve and smart of sin ; curing that which it chastiseth with true remorse, and preventing need of new cure, with the detestation of

the disease. Despair of the success is a bit against evil attempts, and the hearse of idle hopes, ending endless things in their first motion to begin.—True Joy is the rest and reward of virtue, seasoning difficulties with delight, and giving a present essay of future happiness.—Finally, there is no passion but hath a serviceable use, either in pursuit of good, or avoidance of evil; and they are all benefits of God, and helps of Nature, so long as they are kept under Virtue's correction.

But as too much of the best is evil, and excess in virtue vice, so passions let loose without limits are imperfections; nothing being good that wanteth measure. And as the sea is unfit for traffic, not only when the winds are too boisterous, but also when they are too still, and a middle gale and motion of the waves serveth best the sailor's purpose; so neither too strong nor too calm a mind giveth virtue the first course, but a middle temper between them both, in which the well-ordered passions are wrought to prosecute, not suffered to pervert, any virtuous endeavour.—Such were the passions of this holy Saint, which were not guides to reason, but attendants upon it; and commanded by such a love as could never exceed, because the thing loved was of infinite perfection. And if her weakness of faith (an infirmity then common to all Christ's disciples) did suffer her understanding to be deceived, yet was her will so settled in a most sincere and perfect love, that it led all her passions with the

same bias, recompensing the want of belief with the strange effects of an excellent charity.

This love, and these passions, are the subject of this Discourse, which, though it reach not the dignity of Mary's deserts, yet shall I think my endeavours well repaid if it may but woo some pens, more skilful, from unworthy labours, either to supply, in this matter, my want of ability, or in other of like piety (whereof the Scripture is full) to exercise their happier talents. I know that none can express a passion that he feeleth not, neither doth the pen deliver but what it copieth out of the mind ; and therefore the finest wits are now given to write passionate discourses. I would wish them to make choice of such passions as it neither would be shame to utter, nor sin to feel. But whether my wishes in this behalf take effect or not, I reap, at the least, this reward of my pains—that I have showed my desire to answer your courtesy, and set forth the due praises of this glorious Saint.

Your loving friend,

R. S.

TO THE READER.

MANY, suiting their labours to the popular vein, and guided by the gale of vulgar breath, have divulged divers pathetic Discourses, in which if they had shewn as much care to profit, as they have done desire to please, their Works would much more have honored their names, and availed the reader. But it is a just complaint among the better sort of persons, that the finest wits lose themselves in the vainest follies, spilling much art in some idle fancy, and leaving their own works as witnesses how long they have been in travail, to be, in fine, delivered of a fable. And sure it is a thing greatly to be lamented, that men of so high conceit should so much abase their abilities, that when they have racked them to the uttermost endeavour, all the praise that they reap of their employment consisteth in this, that they have wisely told a foolish tale, and carried a long lie very smoothly to the end. Yet this inconvenience might find some excuse, if the drift of their discourse levelled at any virtuous mark; for in fables are often figured moral truths, and that covertly uttered to a common good, which, without a mark, would not find so free a passage: but when the

substance of the work hath neither truth nor probability, nor the purport thereof tendeth to any honest end, the writer is rather to be pitied than praised, and his books fitter for the fire than for the press. This common oversight more have observed than endeavoured to remedy; every one being able to reprove, none willing to redress such faults, authorised, especially, by {general custom. And if necessity (the lawless patron of enforced actions) had not more prevailed than choice, this Work, of so different a subject from the usual vein, should have been no eye-sore to those that are pleased with worse matters: yet the copies flew so fast and so false abroad, that it was in danger to come corrupted to the print. It seemed a less evil to let it fly to common view in the natural plume, and with its own wings, than disguised in a coat of a bastard feather, or cast off from the fist of such a corrector as might haply have perished the sound, and impeded it in some sick and sorry feathers of his own fancies. It may be that courteous skill will reckon this, though coarse in respect of others' exquisite labours, not unfit to entertain well-tempered humours both with pleasure and profit; the ground thereof being in Scripture, and the form of enlarging it an imitation of the ancient doctors in the same and other points of like tenour. This commodity at the least it will carry with it, that the reader may learn to love without improof of piety, and teach his thoughts

either to temper passion in the mean, or to give the bridle only where the excess cannot be faulty. Let the Work defend itself, and every one pass his answer as he seeth cause. Many *carps* are expected, when curious eyes come a-fishing; but the care is already taken, and Patience waiteth at the table, to take away when this dish is served in, and to make room for others to set on the desired fruit.

R. S.

Luctum unigeniti fac tibi, planctum amarum.

JEREM. Chap. vi. Ver. 26.

“ Make thee mourning as for an only son, a bitter lamentation.”

MARY MAGDALEN'S

Funeral Tears.

AMONGST other mournful accidents of the Passion of Christ, that love presenteth itself unto my memory, with which the blessed Mary Magdalen, loving our Lord more than herself, followed him in his journey to his death, attending upon him when his disciples fled, and being more willing to die with him than to live without him. But not finding the favor to accompany him in death, and loathing to remain in life after him, the fire of her true affection inflamed her heart, and her inflamed heart resolved into incessant tears; so that burning and bathing between love and grief, she led a life ever dying, and felt a death never ending; and when he by whom she lived was dead, and she for whom he died enforcedly left alive, she praised the dead more than the living; and having lost that light of her life, she desired to dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, choosing Christ's tomb for her best home, and his corse for her chief comfort: for Mary (as the Evangelist saith) "*stood without at the tomb, weeping.*"

But, alas! how unfortunate is this woman, to whom neither life will afford a desired farewell, nor death allow any wished welcome! She hath abandoned the living, and chosen the company of the dead; and now it seemeth that even the dead have forsaken her, since the corse she seeketh is taken away from her; and this was the cause that love induced her to stand, and sorrow enforced her to weep. Her eye was watchful to seek whom her heart most longed to enjoy, and her feet in readiness to run if her eye should chance to espy him; and therefore she standeth to be still stirring, prest to watch every way, and prepared to go whither any hope should call her. But she wept because she had such occasion of standing; and that which moved her to watch, was the motive of her tears. Yet was not this the entrance, but the increase of her grief—not the beginning, but the renewing of her moans; for first she mourned for the departing of his soul out of his body, and now she lamented the taking of his body out of the grave; being punished with two wrecks of her only welfare, both full of misery, but the last without all comfort. The first original of her sorrow grew, because she could not enjoy him alive; yet this sorrow had some solace, for that she hoped to have enjoyed him dead.

But when she considered that his life was already lost, and now not so much as his body could be found, she was wholly daunted with dismay, since this un-

happiness admitted no help. She doubted lest the love of her Master (the only portion that her fortune had left her) would soon languish in her cold breast, if it neither had his words to kindle it, his presence to cherish it, nor so much as his dead ashes to foster it. She had prepared her spices, and provided her ointments, to pay him the last tribute of external duties; and though Joseph and Nicodemus had already bestowed an hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, which was in quantity sufficient, in quality of the best, and as well applied as art and devotion could devise; yet such was her love, that she would have thought any quantity too little, except her's had been added; the best in quality too mean, except her's were with it; and no diligence in applying it enough, except her service were in it. Not that she was sharp in censuring what others had done, but because love made her so desirous to do all herself, that though all had been done that she could devise, and as well as she could wish, yet unless she were an actor, it would not suffice; since love is as eager to be uttered in effects, as it is zealous in true affection. She came, therefore, now, meaning to embalm his corse as she had before anointed his feet, and to preserve the relics of his body as the only remnant of all her bliss. And as in the spring of her felicity she had washed his feet with her tears, bewailing unto him the death of her own soul, so now she came, in the depth of her misery, to shed

them afresh for the death of his body : but when she saw the grave open, and the body taken out, the labour of embalming was prevented, but the cause of her weeping increased ; and he that was wanting to her obsequies, was not wanting to her tears ; and tho' she found not whom to anoint, yet found she whom to lament.

And not without cause did Mary complain, finding her first anguish doubled with a second grief, and being surcharged with two most violent sorrows in one afflicted heart : for having settled her whole affection upon Christ, and summed all her desires and wishes into the love of his goodness, as nothing could equal his worth, so was there not in the whole world either a greater benefit for her to enjoy than himself, or any greater damage possible than his loss. What marvel, therefore, that her vehement love to so lovely a Lord should feel as bitter pangs at his loss, as before it tasted joys in his presence ; and open as large an issue to tears of sorrow, as heretofore to tears of contentment ? And though tears were apter to nourish than diminish her grief, yet now being plunged into the depth of pain, she yielded herself captive to all discomfort, carrying an overthrown mind in a more enfeebled body ; and still busy in devising, but ever doubtful in defining, what she might best do : for what could a silly woman do but weep, that, floating in a sea of cares, found neither ear to hear her, nor

tongue to direct her, nor hand to help her, nor heart to pity her in her desolate case? True it is that Peter and John came with her to the tomb, and, to make trial of her report, were both within it; but as they were speedy in coming, and diligent in searching, so were they as quick to depart, and fearful of farther seeking. And, alas! what gained she by their coming but two witnesses of her loss, two dismayers of her hope, and two partners of a new despair? Love moved them to come, but their love was soon conquered with such fear, that it suffered them not to stay. But Mary, hoping in despair, and persevering in hope, stood without fear, because she now thought nothing left that ought to be feared, for she hath lost her Master, to whom she was so entirely devoted, that he was the total of her loves, the height of her hopes, and the uttermost of her fears; and therefore, besides him she could neither love any other creature, hope for any other comfort, or fear any other loss. The worst she could fear was the death of her body; and that she rather desired than feared, since she had already lost the life of her soul, without which, any other life would be a death; and with which, any other death would have been a delight. But now she thought it better to die than to live, because she might happily, dying, find whom, not dying, she looked not to enjoy; and not enjoying, she had little wish to live. For now she loved nothing in her life but her

love to Christ ; and if any thing did make her willing to live, it was only the unwillingness that his image should die with her, whose likeness love had engraven on her heart, and treasured up in her sweetest memories ; and had she not feared to efface the tablet, and to break open the closet to which she had entrusted this last relick of her lost happiness, the violence of grief would have melted her heart into inward tears, and blotted her remembrance with a faithful oblivion. And yet nevertheless she is now in so imperfect a sort alive, that it is proved true in her, that *love is strong as death.*

But O, Mary, by whose counsel, upon what hope, or with what heart, couldst thou stand alone, when the Disciples were departed ? Thou wert there once before they came, thou turnedst again at their coming, and yet thou stayest when they are gone !— Alas ! that thy Lord is not in the tomb, thine own eyes have often seen, the Disciples' hands have felt, the empty sindon * doth avouch ; and cannot all this win thee to believe it ? No, no—thou would'st rather condemn thine own eyes of error, and both their eyes and hands of deceit—yea, rather suspect all testimonies for untrue, than not seek him whom thou hast lost, even there where by no diligence he could be found. When thou thinkest of other places, and canst not

* Winding-sheet.

Imagine any so likely as this, thou lookest again into this ; for though never so often searched, it is still a haunt for hope : for when things dearly affected are lost, love's nature is, never to be weary of searching even the oftenest-searched corners ; being more willing to think that all the senses are mistaken, than to yield that hope should quail. Yet now since it is so evident that he is taken away, what should move thee to remain here, where the peril is apparent, and no profit likely ?—Can the wit of a woman wholly possessed with passion have more light to discern danger than two men, both principal favorites of the parent of all wisdom ? Or were not two together, both to Christ sworn champions, each to other affected friends, and to all his enemies professed foes, more likely to have prevailed than one feminine heart, timorous by nature, and already amazed with this dreadful accident ?

But, alas ! why do I urge her with reason, whose reason is altered into love, and who judgeth it folly to follow such reason as would any way impair her love ? Her thoughts were arrested by every thread of Christ's sardon, and she was captive to as many fetters as the tomb had memories of her lost master. What marvel, then, that the Apostles' example drew her not away, since the violence of her love enforced her to remain, prescribed laws to her will, and suffered her to be guided by no other law but itself ? She could not think of any fear, nor stand in fear of any force. Love armed

her against all hazards ; and being already wounded with the greatest grief, she had no leisure to remember any lesser evil. Yea, she had forgotten all things, and herself among all things, only mindful of him she loved above all things. And yet her love, by reason of her loss, drowned both her mind and memory so deep in sorrow, and so busied her mind in the conceit of his absence, that all remembrance of his former promises was diverted with the throng of present discomforts ; and she seemed to have forgotten also him, besides whom she remembered nothing : for doubtless had she remembered him as she should, she would not have now thought the tomb a fit place to seek him, neither would she mourn for him as dead, and removed by others' force, but joy in him, as revived and risen by his own power—for he had often foretold the manner of his death, and the day of his resurrection. But, alas ! let her heaviness excuse her, and the unwontedness of the miracle plead her pardon, since dread and amazement have dulled her senses, distempered her thoughts, discouraged her hopes, awaked her passions, and left her no other liberty but to weep. She wept, therefore, being only able to weep. *And as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the monument, and she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ?—John xx.*

O Mary, thy good help exceedeth thy hope ; and and where thy last sorrow was bred, thy first succour springeth. Thy weeping was for a man, and thy tears have obtained angels. Suppress now thy sadness, and refresh thy heart with this good fortune. These angels invite thee to a parley—they seem to take pity of thy case, and it may be they have some happy tidings to tell thee. Thou hast hitherto sought in vain, as one either unseen or unknown, or at the least unregarded, since the party thou seekest neither tendereth thy tears nor answereth thy cries, nor relenteth with thy lamentings. Either he doth not hear, or he will not help. He hath, peradventure, left to love thee, and is loth to yield thee relief ; and therefore take such comfort as thou findest, since thou art not so lucky as to find that which thou couldst wish. Remember what they are, where they sit, whence they come, and to whom they speak. They are angels of peace, neither sent without cause, nor seen but of favour ; they sit in the tomb, to shew that they are no strangers to thy loss ; they come from Heaven, from whence all happy news descendeth ; they speak to thyself, as though they had some special embassage to deliver to thee.—Ask them, therefore, of thy master, for they are likeliest to return thee a desired answer. Thou knowest him too well to think that hell had devoured him : thou hast long sought, and hast not found him on earth ; and what place so fit for him as in Heaven?—

Ask, therefore, of those angels that came newly from thence, and it may be their report will highly please thee: or if thou art resolved to continue thy seeking, who can better help thee than they that are as swift as thy thought, as faithful as thine own heart, and as loving to thy Lord as thou thyself? Take, therefore, thy good hap, lest it be taken away from thee, and content thee with angels, since thy master hath given thee over.

But, alas! what meaneth this change? and how happeneth this strange alteration? The time hath been, that fewer tears would have wrought greater effect, shorter seeking have sooner found, and less pain have procured more pity:—the time hath been, that thy anointing his feet was accepted and praised, thy washing them with tears highly commended, and thy wiping them with thy hair most courteously construed. How then doth it now fall out, that having brought thy sweet oils to anoint his whole body; having shed as many tears as would have washed more than his feet; and having not only thy hair, but thy heart, ready to serve him, he is not moved, with all these duties, so much as once to afford thee his sight? Is it not he that reclaimed thee from thy wandering courses, that dispossessed thee of thy damned inhabitants, and from the wilds of sin recovered thee into the fold and family of his flock? Was not thy house his home, his love thy life, thyself his disciple? Did not he defend thee

against the Pharisee, plead for thee against Judas, and excuse thee to thy sister? In fine, was not he thy patron and protector in all thy necessities?

O good Jesu! what hath thus estranged thee from her? Thou hast heretofore so pitied her tears, that seeing them, thou couldst not refrain thine own. In one of her greatest agonies for love of her that so much loved thee, thou didst recall her dead brother to life, turning her complaint into unexpected contentment: and we know that thou dost not use to alter course without cause, nor to chastise without desert. Thou art the first that invitest, and the last that forsakest; never leaving but when first left, and ever offering till thou art refused. How then hath she forfeited thy favour, or with what trespass hath she earned thy ill-will? That she never ceased to love thee, her heart will depose, her tongue will protest, her tears will testify, and her seeking doth assure. And, alas! is her particular case so far from example, that thou shouldst rather alter thy nature, than she better her fortune, and be to her as thou art to no other? For our parts, since thy last shew of liking towards her, we have found no other fault in her but that she was the earliest up to seek thee, the readiest to anoint thee, and, when she saw that thou wert removed, she forthwith did weep for thee, and presently went for help to find thee. And whereas those two that she brought, being less careful of thee than fearful of themselves, when they

had seen what she had said, suddenly shrunk away, behold she still stayeth, she still seeketh, she still weepeth.—If this be a fault, we cannot deny but this she doth, and to this she persuadeth ; yea, this she neither meaneth to amend, nor requested thee to forgive. If, therefore, thou reckonest this as punishable, punished she must be, since no excuse hath effect, where the fact pleadeth guilty. But if this import not any offence, but a true affection, and be rather a good desire than an evil desert, why art thou so hard a judge to so soft a creature, requiting her love with thy loss, and suspending her hopes in this unhappiness? Are not these thy words? *I love those that love me : and who watcheth early for me shall find me.*—Why then doth not this woman find thee, that was up so early to watch for thee? Why dost thou not with like repay her, that bestoweth upon thee her whole love, since thy word is her warrant, and thy promise her due debt? Art thou less moved with these tears that she sheddeth for thee, her only master, than thou wert with those she shed before thee for her deceased brother? or doth her love to thy servant more please thee than her love to thyself? Our love to others must not be to them, but to thee in them: for he loveth thee so much the less, that loveth any thing with thee. If, therefore, she then deserved well for loving thee in another, she deserveth better now for loving thee in thyself; and if indeed thou lovest those that love thee,

did not see a cause for which he will not be seen by thee. Still thy plaint, and stay thy weeping, for I doubt there is some trespass in thy tears, and some sin in thy sorrow. Dost thou not remember his words to thee and to the other women, when he said, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children?* What meanest thou then by continuing this course? Doth he forbid thy tears, and wilt thou not forbear them? Is it no fault to infringe his will, or is not that his will which his words import? The fault must be mended ere the penance be released, and therefore either cease to weep, or never hope to find. But I know this logic little pleaseth thee, and I might as soon win thee to forbear living, as to leave weeping.

Thou wilt say, that though he forbade thee to weep for him, yet he left thee free to weep for thyself; and since thy love hath made thee one with him, thou weepest but for thyself when thou weepest for him.—Yea, but (sayst thou) to bar me from weeping, is to abridge me of liberty, and restraint of liberty is a penalty, and every penalty supposeth some offence; but it is no offence to weep for myself. Nay, if this be a fault, I will never amend it; and let them that think it so, do penance for it. For my part, since I have lost my mirth, I will make much of my sorrow; and since I have no joy but in tears, I may lawfully shed them. And what need had he to weep upon the Cross, but for our example? which, if it were good for

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him to give, it cannot be evil for me to follow. No, no—it is not my weeping that causeth my loss, since a world of eyes and a sea of tears could not worthily bewail the loss of such a master.

Yet since neither thy seeking findeth, nor thy weeping prevaileth, satisfy thyself with the sight of angels. Demand the cause of their coming, and the reason of thy Lord's removal; and since they first offer thee occasion of parley, be not thou too dainty of thy discourse. It may be they can calm thy sorrows, and quiet thy unrest, and therefore conceal not from them thy wounds, lest thou lose the benefit of their cure.

But nothing can move Mary to admit of comfort, or entertain any company, for to one alone, and for ever, she hath vowed herself; and she will never lend her ear long except it be to him, nor borrow help except from him, lest by seeking to allay her smart she should lessen her love. But drawing into her mind all pensive conceits, she museth and pineth in a consuming languor, taking comfort in nothing but being comfortless.—Alas! (saith she,) small is the light that a star can yield when the sun is down, and a sorry exchange to go gather the crumbs, after the loss of a heavenly repast. My eyes are not used to see by the glimpse of a spark; and in seeking the sun, it is either needless or bootless to borrow the light of a candle. If they come to disburthen me of my heaviness, their coming will be burthensome unto me, and

they will but load me, the more they labour my relief. They cannot persuade me that my master is not lost, for my own eyes will disprove them. They can less tell me where he may be found, for they would not be so simple as to stay so long from him ; or if they can forbear him, surely they do not know him, whom none can truly know and live long without. All their demurs would be tedious, and their discourses irksome. Impair my love they might, but satisfy it they could not ; he that first accepted the debt can alone be the payment. They either want power, will, or leave to tell me my desire, or at the first word they would have done it, since angels are not used to idle speeches, and to me all talk is idle that doth not tell me of my master. They know not where he is, and therefore they are come to the place where he last was, making the tomb their heaven, and the remembrance of his presence the food of their felicity. Whatsoever they could tell me, if they told me not of him, and whatsoever they could tell me of him, if they told me not where he were, both their telling and my hearing were but a wasting of time. I neither came to see them, nor desire to hear them. I came not to see angels, but him that made both me and angels, and to whom I owe more than both to men and angels ; and to thee I appeal, O most loving Lord ! whether my afflicted heart doth not truly defray the tribute of an undivided love.—To thee I appeal, whether I have joined any partner with thee in

the small possession of my poor self. And would to God I were as privy to where thy body is, as thou, who art the only Lord and owner of my soul!

But, alas! sweet Jesu, where thou wert thou art not, and where thou art I know not. Wretched is the state that I am in, and yet how to better it I cannot imagine. Alas! O my only desire, why hast thou left me wavering in these uncertainties, and my perplexed and doubtful thoughts to wander in so wild a maze? If I stay here where he is not, I shall never find him; if I go farther to seek, I know not whither. To leave the tomb is death; and to stand helpless by it, an incurable disease; so that all my comfort is now concluded in this—I am free to choose whether I will stay without help, or go without hope; that is, in effect, with what torment I will end my life. And yet even this were too happy a choice for so unhappy a creature. If I might be chooser of my own death, O how quickly should choice be made, and how willingly would I run to that execution! I would be nailed to the same cross with the same nails, and in the same place; my heart should be wounded with the same spear, my head with his thorns, my body with his whips. Finally, I would taste all his torments, and tread all his embued and bloody steps.—But O, ambitious thoughts, why gaze you upon so high a felicity? why think you of so glorious a death, that are privy to so infamous a life? Death, alas! I deserve—nay, not one, but infinite deaths. But so sweet a death, seasoned with so

many comforts, the very instruments whereof were able to raise the dead, and render pure the most defiled soul, would be too small a scourge for my great offences ; and therefore I am left to feel as many deaths as I live hours, and to pass as many pangs as I have thoughts of my loss, which are as many as there are minutes, and as violent as if all were summed up in one. But since I can neither die as he died, nor live where he lieth dead, I will live by his grave, and die on his sweet tomb. No, no—though I have been robbed of the saint, I will at least have care of the shrine ; and though it be spoiled of the most sovereign host, yet shall it be the altar where I will daily sacrifice my heart, and offer up my tears.—Here will I ever lead—yea, here do I mean to end my wretched life, that I may at least be buried by the tomb of my Lord, and take my iron sleep near this couch of stone, which his presence hath made the place of sweetest repose. It may be, also, that this empty sindon lieth here to no use ; and this tomb being open, without any in it, may give occasion to some merciful heart that shall first light upon my unburied body, to wrap me in his shroud, and to inter me in this tomb.

O too fortunate a lot for so unfortunate a woman to crave ! No, no—I do not crave it, for, alas ! I dare not. Yet if such an oversight be committed, I do now beforehand forgive that sinner ; and were it no more presumption to wish it while alive, than to suffer it when dead,

if I knew the party that should first pass by me, I would woo him with my tears, and hire him with my prayers, to bless me with this felicity. And though I do not wish any to do it, yet this (without offence) I may say to all, that I love this sindon above all clothes in the world, and I esteem this tomb more than any prince's monument; yea, I think that corse highly favoured that shall succeed my Lord in it; and for my part, as I mean that the ground where I stand shall be my death-bed, so am I not of Jacob's mind, to have my body buried far from the place where it dieth, but even in the next and readiest grave, and that too as soon as my breath faileth, since delays are bootless where death has won possession.

But, alas! I dare not say any more. Let my body take such fortune as befalleth it; my soul, at the least, shall dwell in this sweet paradise, and from this brittle case of flesh and blood pass presently into the glorious tomb of God and man. It is now enwrapped in a mass of corruption; it shall then enjoy a place of high perfection. Where it is now, it is more by force than by choice, and like a repining prisoner in a loathed gaol; but then in a little room it shall find perfect rest, and in the prison of death the liberty of a joyful life.—O sweet tomb of my sweetest Lord! while I live I will stay by thee; when I die I will cling unto thee; neither alive nor dead will I ever be drawn from thee. Thou art the altar of Mercy, the temple of

Truth, the sanctuary of Safety, the grave of Death, and the cradle of Eternal Life. O cistern of my innocent Joseph, take me into thy dry bosom, since I, and not he, gave just cause of offence to my enraged brethren! But, alas! in what cloud hast thou hidden the light of our way? Upon what shore hast thou cast the preacher of all truth? To what Israelite hast thou yielded the purveyor of our life? Oh, unhappy that I am! why did I not before think of that which I now ask? Why did I leave him when I had him, thus to lament him now that I have lost him? If I had watched with perseverance, either none would have taken him, or they should have taken me with him. But through too much preciseness in keeping the law, I have lost the law-maker; and by being too scrupulous in observing his ceremonies, I have proved irreligious in losing himself; for I should rather have remained with the truth, than have forsaken it to solemnise the figure. The Sabbath could not have been profaned in standing by that corse by which profane things are sanctified, and whose touch doth not defile the clean, but cleanseth the most defiled. But when it was time to stay, I departed:—when it was too late to help, I returned; and now I repent my folly, when it cannot be amended.—But let my heart dissolve in sighs, my eyes melt in tears, and my desolate soul languish in dislikes; yea, let all that I am and have endure the punishment it de-

serves; so that if he was incensed with my fault, he may be appeased with my penance.

→ Thus when her timorous conscience had accused her of so great an omission, and her tongue enforced the evidence with those bitter accusations, Love, that was now the only umpire in all her causes, condemned her eyes to a fresh shower of tears, her breast to a new storm of sighs, and her soul to be the perpetual prisoner to restless sorrows.

But O, Mary, thou deceivest thyself in thy own desires, and it well appeareth that excess of grief hath produced in thee a defect of due providence. And wouldst thou, indeed, have thy wishes come to pass, and thy words fulfilled? Tell me, then, if thy heart were dissolved, where wouldst thou harbour thy Lord? What wouldst thou offer him? How wouldst thou love him? Thine eyes have lost him, thy hands cannot feel him, thy feet cannot follow him; and if he be at all in thee, it is thy heart that hath him; and wouldst thou now have that dissolved, from thence also to exile him?

O, Mary, thou didst not remark what thy master was wont to say, when he told thee that the third day he should rise again; for if thou hadst heard him, or at least understood him, thou wouldst not be thus overwhelmed and embarrassed. And therefore repair to the angels, and enquire more of them, lest the Lord

be displeased, that, coming from him, thou wilt not entertain them.

But Mary's devotions were all fixed upon a nobler Saint, and she had so firmly bound her thoughts to his affection alone, that she rather desired to unknown those whom she knew already, than to burthen her mind with the knowledge of any new acquaintance ; she could not force her will, long since possessed with the highest love, to stoop to the acceptance of any meaner friendship. It was for this, that though she did not scornfully reject, yet did she with humility refuse, the angels' company, thinking it no discourtesy to leave them, in order to devote herself more wholly to her Lord, to whom both she and they were wholly devoted, and owed the utmost debt of love and duty. Sorrow, too, being now the only interpreter of all that sense delivered to her understanding, made her consider their demand in a more doubtful than true meaning:

If (said she) they came to ease my affliction, they could not be so ignorant of the cause ; and if they were not ignorant of it, they would never ask it :— why then did they say, *Woman, why weepest thou?*— If their question did import a prohibition, the necessity of the occasion doth countermand their counsel ; and fitter it were they should weep with me, than I obey them by not weeping. If the sun were ashamed to show his brightness, when the Father of lights was

darkened with such disgrace ;—if the heavens, disfiguring their beauties, suited themselves to their Maker's form ;—if the whole frame of Nature were almost dissolved, to see the Author of Nature so unnaturally abused ;—why may not angels, that best know the indignity of the case, make up a part in this lamentable concert ? and especially now, when, by the loss of his body, the cause of weeping is increased, and yet the number of mourners lessened : for the apostles are fled, and all his friends afraid, and poor I left alone to supply the tears of all creatures. *O who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears unto my eyes, that I may weep day and night, and never cease weeping ?*

Oh, my only Lord, thy grief was the greatest that ever was in man, and my grief as great as ever happened to woman ; for my love has imparted to me no small portion of thine own, thy loss has redoubled the torment of my own, and all creatures [seem to have made over theirs to me, leaving me as the vicegerent of all their sorrows,—Sorrow with me, at the least, thou tomb ! and thaw into tears, ye hardest stones !—The time is come, that ye are licensed to cry aloud, and bound to atone for the silence of your Lord's disciples, of whom he himself said to the Pharisees, that *if they held their peace, the very stones should cry out for them.*—Yes, since fear hath sealed up every lip, and sadness made mute every tongue, let the stones cry

out against the murderers of my Lord, and betray the robbers of his sacred body. It was doubtless the spite of some malicious Pharisee, or ill-minded Scribe, who, not content with those torments he suffered in life, of which every one, to any other, would have been worse than death, hath now stolen away his dead body, to practise upon it some savage cruelty, and to glut their pitiless eyes and brutish hearts with the unnatural usage of his helpless corse.

Doth not his tongue, whose truth is infallible and whose word omnipotent, commanding both the winds and the seas, and never disobeyed by the most insensible creature—doth it not promise to arm the world, and make the whole earth fight against the senseless in defence of the just? And who more just than the Lord of justice? Who more senseless than his barbarous murderers, whose insatiable thirst of his innocent blood could not be stanch'd with their cruelly butchering him at his death, unless they proceeded further in this brutal impiety to his dead body? Why, then, do not all creatures address themselves to revenge so just a quarrel upon such senseless wretches, bereft of all reason, forsaken by humanity, and destitute of all feeling both toward God and man?

Oh, Mary, why dost thou thus torment thyself with these tragical surmises? Dost thou think that the angels would sit still, if their master were ill-used? Did they serve him after his fasting in the desert, and

would they desert him in the solitude of the tomb? Did they comfort him before his apprehension, and would they not defend him when he was dead? If in the garden he might have had twelve legions at his call, has his power too so died with his body, that he is now unable to command them? Was there an angel found to help Daniel, to save Tobias, yea, and to defend Balaam's poor beast from his master's rage; and is the Lord of Angels of so little account, that, if his body stood in need, there should be never an angel to defend it? Thou seest two here present to honour his tomb, and how much more careful would they be, to do homage to his person? Believe not, Mary, that they would smile, if thou hadst such occasion to weep. They would not so gloriously shine in white, if black and mourning weeds did better become them. Yield not greater credit to thy uncertain fear and deceived love, than to their assured love and never-erring charity. Can a material eye see more than a heavenly spirit; or the glimmering of the twilight yield better vision than the beams of their eternal sun? Thinkest thou they would wait by the winding-sheet, if the corse were abused; or be here for thy comfort, if their Lord did need their service? No, no—he was neither any thief's booty, nor Pharisee's prey; neither are the angels so careless of him as thy suspicion presumeth. And if their presence and demeanour cannot alter thy conceit, look upon the clothes, and

they will teach thee thine error, and clear thee of thy doubts. Would any thief, thinkest thou, have been so religious as to have stolen the body, and left the garments? Yea, would he have been so venturous as to have stayed the unshrouding of the corse, the well-ordering of the sheets, and folding up of the napkins? A guilty conscience doubteth want of time, and therefore dispatcheth hastily. It is in hazard to be discovered, and therefore practiseth in darkness and secrecy. It ever worketh in extreme fear, and therefore hath no leisure to place things orderly. What did the watch, while the seals were broken, the tomb opened, the body unfolded, and all things disposed in order? But if all this cannot yet persuade thee, believe, at least, thine own experience, and assure thyself, that if the corse has been removed either by malice or fraud, the linen and myrrh would never have been left; and neither would the angels look so cheerfully, nor the clothes lie so orderly, but to import some happier accident than thou conceivest.

To free thee still more from fear, consider these words of the angels—*Woman, why weepest thou?*—for what do they signify but as much; in effect, as if they had said—“Where angels rejoice, it becometh not that a woman should weep; and where heavenly eyes are witnesses of joy, no mortal eye should control them with testimonies of sorrow. With more than manly courage, thou didst, before our coming, arm thy feet

to run among swords, and thy body to endure all tyrants' rage ; and art thou now so much a woman, that thou canst not command thine eyes to forbear tears ? If thou wert a true disciple, so many proofs would persuade thee ; but now thy incredulous humour maketh thee unworthy of that title, and we can afford thee no better a name than that of woman ; and therefore, *Oh, woman, why weepest thou ?*—If there were here any corse, we might think that sorrow for the dead enforced thy tears ; but now that thou findest it a place of the living, why dost thou stand here weeping for the dead ? Is our presence so uncomfortable, that thou shouldst weep to behold us ? or is this the course of thy kindness to entertain us ? If they be tears of love, to testify thy good will, as thy love is acknowledged, so let these signs be suppressed. If they be tears of anger, to denounce thy displeasure, they should not here have been shed, where all anger was buried, but none deserved. If they be tears of sorrow and duty, they are bestowed in vain here, where the dead alone are received. If they be tears of joy, distilled from the flowers of thy good fortune, fewer of these would suffice, and fitter were other tokens to express thy contentment. And therefore, *Oh, woman, why weepest thou ?* Would our eyes be so dry, if such eye-streams were behoveful ? Yea, would not the heavens rain tears, if thy suppositions were truths ? Do not the angels, in their visible semblances, always repre-

sent the Lord's invisible pleasures, shadowing their shapes to the drift of his intentions? When God was incensed, they brandished swords; when he was appeased, they sheathed them in the scabbard; when he would defend, they resembled soldiers; when he would terrify, they took terrible forms; when he would comfort, they carried gladness in their eyes, sweetness in their countenances, mildness in their words, favour, grace, and comeliness in their whole presence. Why, then, dost thou weep, seeing us to rejoice? Dost thou imagine us to degenerate from our nature, or to forget any duty, whose state is neither subject to change, nor capable of the least offence? Art thou more privy to the counsels of the Eternal, than we that are daily attendants at his throne of glory? Oh, woman! deem not amiss against an evidence so apparent, and, at our request, exchange thy sorrow for our joy."

But oh, glorious angels, why do ye move her to joy, if ye know why she weepeth? Alas! she weepeth for the loss of him, without whom all joy is to her but matter of new grief. While he lived, every place where she found him was to her a paradise; every season wherein he was enjoyed, a perpetual spring; every exercise wherein he was served, a special felicity: the ground whereon he went, seemed to yield her sweeter footing; the air wherein he breathed, became to her a spirit of life, being once sanctified in his sacred breast. In a word, his presence brought with it a heaven of

delights, and his departure seemed to leave an eclipse in all things ; nay, more, even the places that he had once honoured with the access of his person were to her so many sweet pilgrimages, which in his absence she used as so many altars to offer up her prayers, feeling in them, long after his departure, the virtue of his former presence : and therefore, to feed her with conjectures of his well-being, is but to strengthen her fear that evil has befallen him ; and the alledging of likelihoods by those that know the certainty, importeth the cause to be so lamentable, that they are unwilling it should be known. Your obscure glancing at the truth is no sufficient acquittance of her grief ; neither can she, out of these disjoined guesses, spell the words that must be the conclusion of her complaint. Tell her, then, directly, what is become of her Lord, if you mean to deliver her out of this anguish ; for whatever else you say of him doth but rather increase her grief than assuage it.

Yet hearken, O Mary, and consider their speeches. Think what answer thou wilt give them, since they press thee with so strong a persuasion. But I doubt thy mind is bewildered—thou art wholly absorbed in the bloody tragedy of thy slaughtered Lord : his death and loss have gained such absolute possession over all thy powers, that neither can thy sense discern, nor thy mind conceive, any other object than his murdered corse. Thy eyes seem to tell thee that every thing in-

viteth thee to weep ; carrying such outward show, as though all that thou seest were attired in sorrow, to solemnise, with general consent, the funeral of thy Master. Thy tears persuade thee that all sounds and voices are tuned with mournful notes ; that the echo of thine own wailings is the cry of the very stones and trees ; and that, as the cause of thy tears is so unusual, into the very rocks and woods God had inspired a feeling of thine and their common loss. And therefore it soundeth to thee as a strange question—*Why thou weepst*—since all that thou seest and hearest seemeth to induce thee, yea, to enforce thee to weep. If thou seest any thing that beareth colour of mirth, it is unto thee like the rich spoils of a vanquished kingdom to the eye of a captive prince, which remind him of what he had, not what he hath ; and which are but the upbraidings of his loss, and the occasion of sharper sorrow.

Whatsoever thou hearest that moveth delight, presenteth but the loss of thy Master's speeches, which, as they were the only harmony that thy ears affected, so, as they are now hushed in deathful silence, all other words and tunes of comfort are to thee, but as the Israelitish music on the banks of the rivers of Babylon, memories of a lost felicity, and proofs of a present unhappiness. And though love increaseth the conceit of thy loss, which endeareth the meanest things, and doubleth the estimate of things which are precious ;

yet thy faith teaching thee the infinite dignity of thy Master ; and thy understanding being no dull scholar to learn so well-liked a lesson, it fell out to be the bitterest part of thy misery, that thou didst so well know how infinite the loss was that made thee miserable. This is the cause why those very angels, in whom all things make remonstrance of triumph and solace, are unto thee occasions of new grief. Their gracious and lovely countenances do but remind thee, that thou hast lost the beauty of the world, and the highest mark of true love's ambition. Their sweet looks and amiable features tell thee, that the heaven of thy eyes, which was the beauteous majesty of thy Master's face, once shone with far more pleasing graces, though now it is disfigured with the dreadful forms of death. In fine, they are to thee like the glittering sparkles of a broken diamond ; like pictures of dead and decayed beauties—signs, not remedies of thy calamities—memorials, not medicines of thy misfortunes. Thy eyes were too well acquainted with the truth, to accept a supply of shadows ; and as comeliness, happiness, and glory were never so truly at home in any other, and so perfectly in their prime as in the person and speeches of thy Lord ; so cannot thy thoughts but be like strangers in some foreign delight : for in all other delights thou seest no more than some scattered crumbs and hungry morsels of thy late plentiful banquets ; thou findest a dim reflection of thy

former light, which, like a flash of lightning in a close and stormy night, serveth but to show thee thy present infelicity, and the deeper horror of the ensuing darkness. Thou therefore thinkest thyself blameless, both in weeping for thy loss, and in refusing other comfort; yet, in common courtesy, afford these angels an answer, since their charity in visiting thee deserveth much more; and thou, if not too ungrateful, canst allow them no less.

Alas! (saith she,) what needeth my answer, where the misery itself speaketh, and the loss is manifest?—My eyes have answered them with my tears, my breast with its sighs, and my heart with its throbs; why need I also punish my tongue, or wound my soul, with a repetition of so doleful a misfortune? *They have taken away*—Oh, unfortunate word!—*They have taken away my Lord!*—O, afflicted woman, why thinkest thou these words so unfortunate? It may be, the angels have taken him, the more solemnly to entomb him; and since earth has done her last homage, perhaps the choirs of Heaven are also descended, to pay unto him their funeral duties. It may be, that the Centurion, and the rest that did acknowledge him on the Cross to be the Son of God, have been touched with remorse, and visited by the stings of conscience; and being desirous to satisfy for their heinous offence, have now taken him the more honourably to inter him, and by their services to his body, sought forgiveness for the

guilt of their souls.—Perchance some secret disciples have wrought this exploit, and in spite of the watch have taken him from hence, with due honour to preserve him in some fitter place. Being, therefore, as yet uncertain who hath him, the greater probabilities lie on the better side. Why dost thou call sorrow before it cometh, which, without calling, cometh but too fast? Why dost thou create sorrow, where it is not, since thou hast true sorrow enough, and imaginary ones are of no avail? It is folly to suppose the worst, when the best may be hoped; and every mishap bringeth grief enough with it, though we do not go first to meet it with our fears.—Quiet, then, thyself, till time try out the truth; and it may be, thy fear will prove greater than thy misfortune.

But I know thy love is little helped with this lesson; for the more it loveth, the more it feareth; and the more desirous it is to enjoy, the more doubtful it is of losing. It hath neither measure in its hopes, nor mean in its fears; hoping the best upon the least surmises, and fearing the worst upon the weakest grounds. Yet while it both fears and hopes at one and the same time, neither does fear withhold hope from the highest attempts, nor hope strengthen fear against the smallest suspicions: but despite all fears, love's hopes will mount to the highest pitch; and despite all hopes, love's fears will stoop to the lowest ebb. To bid thee, therefore hope, is not to forbid thee to fear; and tho'

it may be for the best that thy Lord is taken from thee, yet since it may be also for the worst, that will never content thee. Thou thinkest hope doth enough to keep thy heart from breaking ; and fear little enough, to force thee to no more than weeping ; since it is as likely that he hath been taken away upon hatred by his enemies, as upon love by his friends.

Hitherto, sayst thou, his friends have all failed him, and his foes prevailed against him ; and therefore, as they that would not defend him alive, are less likely to regard him dead, so they that thought one life too little to take from him, are not unlikely, after death, to wreak new vengeance upon him. And tho' this doubt were not, yet whosoever hath taken him, hath wronged me in not acquainting me with it ; for to take away mine without my consent, can neither be offered without injury, nor suffered without sorrow. And as for Jesus, he was my Jesus, my Lord, and my Master : he was mine, because he was given unto me, and born for me ; he was the author of my being, and so my Father ; he was the worker of my well-being, and therefore my Saviour ; he was the price of my ransom, and therefore my Redeemer ; he was my Lord to command me, my Master to instruct me, and my Pastor to feed me. He was mine, because his love was mine ; and when he gave me his love, he gave me himself, since love is no gift unless the giver be given with it : yea, it is no love, unless it be as liberal of

that it is, as of that it hath. In a word, if the food be mine that I eat ; the life mine wherewith I live ; or he mine, all whose life, labours, and death were mine ; then dare I boldly to say, that Jesus is mine ; for on his body I feed ; by his love I live ; and for my good, without any need of his own, hath he lived, laboured, and died. And therefore though his Disciples, though the Centurion, though the Angels have taken him, they have done me wrong, in defrauding me of my right ; for I never mean to resign my interest in him.

But what if he hath taken himself away, wilt thou also lay injustice to his charge ? Though he be thine, yet thine to command, not to obey ; thy Lord to dispose of thee, and not by thee to be disposed : therefore, as it is no reason that the servant should be master of the master's secrets, so might he remove—and perchance he hath, without acquainting thee whither ; reviving himself by the same power with which he raised thy dead brother, and fulfilling the words that he so often uttered concerning his resurrection.

But oh, cruel tongue ! why pleadest thou thus against him, whose situation is, I fear, so pitiable, that it might rather move all tongues to plead for him ; for perchance he is in their hands, whose unmerciful hearts are making merry with his misery, and building the triumphs of their impious victory upon the ruins of his disgraced glory ? And now, O grief ! because I know not where he is, I cannot imagine how to help

him ; for they have taken him away, and I know not where they have put him.

Alas ! Mary, why dost thou consume thyself with these cares ? His heavenly Father knoweth, and he will help him ; the angels know, and they will guard him ; his own Spirit knoweth, and that will assist him. And what need is there that thou, silly woman, shouldst know it, that canst no way profit him ? But I feel in what vein thy pulse beateth, and by thy desire I discover thy disease. Though both heaven and earth did know it, and the whole world had notice of it, yet except thou also wert made privy to it, thy woes would be as great, and thy tears as many. That others see the sun, doth not lighten thy darkness ; neither can others' eating satisfy thy hunger. The more there are that know of him, the greater is thy sorrow that, among so many, thou art not thought worthy to be one ; and the more there are that can help him, the more it grieveth thee that thy poor help is not accepted among them. Though thy knowledge needeth it not, thy love doth desire it ; and though it avail not, thy desire will seek it. If all know it, thou wouldst know it with all : if no other, thou wouldst know it alone ; and from whomsoever it be concealed, it must be no secret with thee. Though the knowledge would discomfort thee, yet know it thou wilt ; yea, though it would kill thee, thou couldst not forego the knowledge of it.

The Lord is, to thy love, like drink to the thirsty : if they cannot have it, they die for drought ; if they are long without it, they pine away with the longing. And as men in extremity of thirst are still dreaming of fountains, brooks, and springs, being never able to have other thought, or to utter other word, but of drink and moisture ; so lovers, in the vehemence of their passion, can neither think nor speak but of what they love ; and if that be once missing, every part is both an eye to watch, and an ear to listen, for what hope or news soever may be had. If it be good, they die till they hear it ; though bad, yet they cannot live without it. Of the good, they hope that it is the very best ; and of the evil, they fear it to be the worst : and yet, though never so good, they pine till it be told ; and be it never so evil, they are importunate to know it ; and when they once know it, they can neither bear the joy, nor brook the sorrow, both the one and the other being enough to kill them.

And this, O Mary, I guess to be the cause why the angels would not tell thee of the estate thy Lord was in : for had it been to thy liking, thou wouldst have died for joy ; if otherwise, thou wouldst have sunk down for sorrow. And therefore they leave this news for him to deliver, whose word, if it give thee a wound, has also the salve to cure it, be it never so deadly.

But, alas ! afflicted soul, why doth it so deeply grieve thee that thou knowest not where he is ? Thou canst

not better him, if he be well—thou canst as little succour him if he be ill: and since thou fearest that he is rather ill than well, why shouldst thou know it, so to end thy hopes in mishap, and thy great fears in far greater sorrows? Alas! to ask thee why, is, in a manner, to ask one half starved why he is hungry:—for as thy Lord is the food of thy thoughts, the relief of thy wishes, the only repast of all thy desires; so is thy love a continual hunger, and his absence an extreme famine.

But why doth thy sorrow dwell so much upon the place where he is? Was it not enough for thee to know who had him? Must thou also know to what place he is conveyed? A worse place than a grave no man will offer, and many will allow a far better mansion; and therefore thou mayst boldly think, that wheresoever he be, he is in a place fitter for him than where he was. Thy sister Martha confessed him to be the Son of God; doth thy belief agree with her confession? For what place more suited for the Son, than to be with the Father, the business for which he hath been so long from him being fully finished? If he be the Messiah, as thou didst once believe, it was said of him, that *he should ascend on high, and lead captivity captive*. And what is this height but heaven? what this captivity but death? Death, therefore, is become his captive; and what more likely than that, with the

spoils thereof, he is ascended in triumph to eternal life?

But if thou canst not lift thy mind to so favourable a belief, yet mayst thou well suppose he is in paradise. If he came to repair the ruins of Adam's fall, and to be the common parent of our redemption, as Adam was of our original infection, reason itself seems to require, that having all his life endured the penalty of Adam's exile, he should, after death, re-enter in possession of that inheritance which Adam lost. If sorrow at the Cross did not make thee as deaf, as grief at the tomb maketh thee forgetful, thou didst hear himself say to one of the thieves, that the same day he should be with him in Paradise.— And if it be reasonable that no shadow should be more privileged than the body, no figure in more account than the figured truth, why shouldst thou believe that Elias and Enoch have been in Paradise these many ages, and that he, whom they but as types resembled, should be excluded from thence? And yet if the baseness and misery of his passion have laid him so low in thy conceit, that thou thinkest Paradise too high a place to be likely to possess him; the very lowest station that reason can assign him cannot be meaner than the bosom of Abraham. Let not, therefore, the place where he is trouble thee, since it cannot be worse than the grave; and there are infinite reasons to conjecture that it must be better.

But suppose that he were yet remaining on earth, and taken by others out of his tomb, what would it avail thee to know where he were? If he be with such as love and honour him, they will be as wary to keep him as they are loth he should be lost; and therefore will either often change, or never confess the place, knowing that secrecy is the surest guard to defend so great a treasure. If those have taken him that hate and malign him, thou mayest well judge him past thy recovery. Thou wouldst haply make sale of thy living, and seek him by ransom: but it is not likely they would sell him to be honoured, whom they bought to be murdered. —If price would not serve, thou wouldst have recourse to prayer. But would prayer soften such flinty hearts? If they scorned so many tears offered for his life, would they regard thy entreaty for his corse? If neither price nor prayer would prevail, thou wouldst attempt it by force. But, alas! silly soldier, thy arms are too weak to manage weapons, and the issue of thy assault would be the loss of thyself.—If no other way would help, thou wouldst purloin him by stealth, and think thyself happy in contriving such a theft.—Oh, Mary, thou art deceived, for malice would have many locks; and to steal him from a thief that could steal him from the watch, requireth more cunning in the art than thy want of practice can afford thee. Yet if this be the cause why thou enquirest of the place, thou showest the force of

thy rare affection, and deservest the laurel of a perfect lover.

And first, of the ransom.—Were we to ask thee, how love could enrich thee, when thy worldly possessions were gone ; or how a dead man could repay thee the value of the ransom ; already I hear thee reply— Ah, the love of so sweet a Lord hath no correspondence with wordly wealth ! Without him I should be poor, though empress of the world : with him, I should be rich, though I possessed nothing but himself. They that have most are accounted richest, and such are thought to have most, as have all they desire ; and therefore as in him alone is the uttermost of my desires, so he alone is the sum of all my substance. It were too happy an exchange to have God for all the riches of the world, and too rich a poverty to enjoy the only treasure in the world ! If I were so fortunate a beggar, I would disdain the wealth of Solomon ; and my love being so highly enriched, my life would never complain of want.

And secondly, of obtaining thy Lord by entreaties.— With enemies so cruel, canst thou think it possible for such a suit to speed ? Would thy love shield thee from their rage, or tyrants stoop to a woman's tears ? It is thus I hear thee reply—Though I were to sue to the greatest tyrant, yet the equity of my suit is more than half a grant. If many drops soften the hardest stones, why should not many tears supple the most

stony hearts? What anger so fiery, that may not be quenched with tears? My suit itself would sue for me, and would quicken pity in the most iron hearts.— But suppose that, by touching a rankled sore, my touch should anger it, and my petition, at the first, incense him that heard it; he would, perchance, revile me in words, and then his own injury would recoil with remorse, and be unto me a pattern how to proceed in my request. And if he should accompany his words with blows, and his blows with wounds; may be my stripes would smart in his guilty mind, and his conscience bleed in my bleeding wounds; and my innocent blood so soften his adamant heart, that his own inward feelings would plead my cause, and peradventure obtain my suit. But if, through extremity of spite, he should kill me, his offence might easily redound to my felicity: for he would be as careful to hide me, whom he had unjustly murdered, as him whom he had feloniously stolen; and it is not unlikely but he would hide me in the same place where he had laid my Lord. And as he hated us both for one cause, him for challenging, and me for acknowledging that he was the Messiah; so he would use us both after the same manner. And thus the comfort that my body wanted, my soul would enjoy, in seeing a part of myself partner of my master's misery; with whom to be miserable, I esteem a higher fortune than without him to be most happy.

And thirdly, of recovering thy Lord by force, or adventuring a theft to obtain thy desire.—And art thou, then, armed so completely in love, that thou thinkest it sufficient armour? Doth thy love endue thee with such a Judith's spirit, that thou canst foil whole armies? Can it thus alter sex, change nature, and exceed all art? And if it be a sin to steal profane treasure, can it be less than sacrilege to steal the Lord's Anointed? How ready is thy reply!—If there were no other means of recovering him but force, I see no reason why it may not well become me. It often happeneth that Nature, armed with love, and pressed with need, exceedeth itself in might, and summoneth all hope in success; and as the equity of the cause breathes courage into the defenders, making them the more willing to fight, and the less unwilling to die; so guilty consciences are ever timorous, still starting with sudden frights, and afraid of their own suspicions; ready to yield before the assault, upon distress of their cause, and despair of their defence. Since, therefore, to recover a right, and to redress so deep a wrong, is so just a cause, nature will enable me, love encourage me, grace confirm me, and the Judge of all justice fight in my behalf.

And if it seem unfitting to my sex in talk, much more in practice, to deal with material affairs; yet when such a cause happeneth as never had pattern, such effects must follow as are without example.—

There never was a wrong like this committed, nor when committed, suffered to pass unrevenged. Since, then, the angels neglect, and men forget, O Judith, lend me thy prowess, for I am bound to regard it.— But suppose that my force were unable to win him by an open enterprise, what scruple should keep me from seeking him by secret means? Yea, and if by plain stealth, will it be thought a sin, and shall I be condemned for a theft? If this be so great a sin, and so heinous a theft, let me live and die such a sinner, and be condemned for such a theft!—

But, alas! while I thus stand devising what to do, I know nothing of him. I neither know who hath him, nor where they have placed him: I am still found to dwell on the same theme, that *they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have put him.*—

While Mary was thus lost in a labyrinth of doubts, intermingling her words with tears, she beheld the angels rise with a kind of reverence, as though they had done honour to one behind her. *She turned back, and saw Jesus standing: but she knew not that it was Jesus.*

O, Mary, is it possible that thou hast forgotten Jesus? Faith has written him in thine understanding, love in thy will, both fear and hope in thy memory; and how can all these registers be so cancelled, that, so plainly seeing, thou shouldst not know the contents?

For him only thou tirest thy feet, thou bendest thy knees, thou wringest thy hands; for him thy heart throbbeth, thy breast sigheth, thy tongue complaineth; for him thine eye weepeth, thy thought sorroweth, thy whole body fainteth, and thy soul languisheth. In a word, there is no part of thee but is busy about him; and notwithstanding all this, hast thou now forgotten him? His countenance avoucheth it, his voice assureth it, his wounds witness it, thine own eyes behold it; and dost thou not yet believe that this is Jesus? Are thy eyes, so sharp for seeing, become so weak-sighted, that they are dazzled with the sun, and blinded with the light? But there is such a shower of tears between thee and him, that though thou seest the shape of a man, yet thou canst not discern him.—Thine ears also are still so possessed with the melancholy echo of his last speeches, uttered in a faint and dying voice, that the force and loudness of his living words make thee imagine it the voice of a stranger; and therefore as he seemeth unto thee so like a stranger, he asketh this question of thee—*Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?*

O desire of her heart, and only joy of her soul! why demandest thou why she weepeth or whom she seeketh? It is but a short time since she saw thee, her only hope, hanging on a tree, with thy head pierced with thorns, thine eyes full of tears, thine ears full of blasphemies, thy mouth full of gall, thy whole person mangled and

disfigured ; and dost thou ask her why she weepeth ? Scarce three days have passed since she beheld thine arms and legs racked with violent pangs, thy hands and feet pierced with nails, thy side wounded with a spear, thy whole body torn with stripes, and gored in blood ; and dost thou, her only grief, ask her why she weepeth ? She beheld thee upon the Cross with many tears, and most lamentable cries, yielding up the ghost ; and, alas ! asketh thou why she weepeth ?— But now is her misery complete. She had still cherished one hope, which was, that, as some relief of her afflictions, she might have anointed thy body : but that hope is also dead, since thy body is removed, and she now standeth hopeless of all help ; and demandest thou why she weepeth, and whom she seeketh ? Full well thou knowest that she desireth none but thee, that she loveth none but thee, that she contemneth all things beside thee ; and canst thou find in thy heart to ask her whom she seeketh ?—To what end, O sweet Lord, dost thou thus suspend her longings, protract her desires, and martyr her with these tedious delays ? Thou alone art the fortress of her faint faith, the anchor of her wavering hope, the very centre of her vehement love ; to thee she trusteth, upon thee she relieth, and of herself she wholly despaireth. She is so earnest in seeking thee, that she can neither seek nor think of any other thing ; and her whole soul is so

busied in musing upon thee, that all her senses are abstracted, and unable to discern thee.

Being, therefore; so attentive to that which she thinketh, what wonder she noticeth not him whom she seeth? And since thou hast so perfect a knowledge of her thought, and she so little power to discover thee by her sense, why demandest thou, whom she seeketh, and why she weepeth? Canst thou expect her to answer, that she seeks for thee, and weeps for thee, unless thou wilt unbind her thoughts, that her eyes may fully see thee; or, while thou wishest to be concealed, dost thou expect that she should be able to know thee?

But oh, *Mary*, it is not without cause that he asks thee this question: Thou wouldst have him alive, and yet thou weepst because thou dost not find him dead: Thou art sorry that he is not here, and for this very cause thou shouldst rather be glad: for if he were dead, it is most likely he would be here; but not being here, it is a sign that he is alive. He rejoiceth to be out of his grave, and thou weepst because he is not in it. Alas! why bewailest thou his glory, and injurest the reviving of his body, by considering it as the robbing of his corse? If he is alive, for what dead man dost thou mourn? and if he be present, whose absence dost thou lament? *But she, taking him to be a gardener, said unto him, Master, if thou hast carried*

him from hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

O, wonderful effects of Mary's love! If love be a languor, how liveth she by it? If love be her life, how dieth she in it? If it bereaved her of sense, how did she see the angels? If it quickened her sense, why knew she not Jesus? Dost thou seek for one, whom, when thou hast found him, thou knowest him not?—Or if thou dost know him when thou findest him, why dost thou seek, when thou hast him?

Behold, Jesus is come! He whom thou seekest it is that talketh with thee. O Mary, call up thy mind, and open thine eyes. Hath thy Lord lived so long, laboured so much, died with such pain, and shed such showers of blood; and hast thou bestowed such cost, so much sorrow, and so many tears, for no better man than a gardener? Alas! is the sorry garden the best inheritance that thy love can afford him, or a gardener's office the highest dignity that thou wilt allow him?—But thy mistaking hath in it a further mystery.

Thou thinkest not amiss, though thy sight be deceived: for as our first Father, in the state of grace and innocence, was placed in a garden of pleasure, and as the first office allotted him was to be a gardener, so the first man that ever was in glory appeareth first in a garden, and presenteth himself in a gardener's likeness, that the beginnings of glory might resemble the entrance of innocence and grace. And as a gar-

dener caused the fall of mankind, and was the parent of sin, and the author of death ; so is this gardener the raiser of our ruins, the ransom of our offences, and the restorer of life. In a garden, Adam was deceived, and taken captive by the devil ;—in a garden, Christ was betrayed, and taken prisoner by the Jews :—in a garden, Adam was condemned to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow ; and after a free gift of the bread of angels, in the last supper, in a garden Christ did earn it us by a bloody sweat of his whole body. By disobediently eating the fruit of a tree, our right to that garden was by Adam forfeited ; and by the obedient death of Christ upon a tree, a far better right is now recovered.

For this did Christ, in the canticles, invite us to a heavenly banquet, after he was come into his garden, and had reaped his myrrh and his spice, to forewarn us of the joy that after this harvest should presently ensue, namely, that having sowed in this garden a body, the mortality whereof was signified by these spices, he now reaped the same, neither capable of death, nor subject to corruption. For this also was Mary permitted to mistake, that we might be informed of the mystery, and see how aptly the course of our redemption did answer the process of our condemnation.

But though he be the gardener that hath planted the tree of grace, and restored us to the use and eating

of the fruit of life—though it be he that soweth his gifts in our souls, quickening in us the seeds of virtue, and rooting out of us the weeds of sin ;—yet is he, nevertheless, the same Jesus he was ; and the borrowed presence of a mean labourer neither altereth his person, nor diminisheth his right to divine titles.

Why, then, canst thou not as well see what in truth he is, as what in shew he seemeth ? It is because thou trusteth more to thy senses than to thy belief, and sufferest thy fancy to find more than faith will avouch : it is for this cause that thy love was thought worthy to see him, yet thy faith unworthy to know him. Thou didst seek for him as dead, and therefore dost not know him seeing him alive ; and because thou believest not of him as he is, thou dost only see him as he seemeth to be. I cannot say thou art faultless, because thou art so unwilling in thy belief ; but thy fault deserveth favour, because thy charity is so great ; and therefore, O merciful Jesu, let an excuse be pleaded for her whom thou art minded to forgive.

She thought to have found thee as she left thee, and she sought thee as she last saw thee ; being so overcome with sorrow for thy death, that she had neither room nor respite in her mind for any hope of thy life ; and was so deeply entombed in the grief of thy burial, that she could not raise her thoughts to any conceit of thy resurrection.

But oh, Mary, since thou art so desirous to know where thy Jesus is, why dost thou not name him when thou askest for him? Thou saidst to the angels, that they had taken away thy Lord, and now the second time thou askest for him. When thou speakest of him, what *him* dost thou mean? or how can a stranger understand thee, when thou talkest of *thy Lord*?—Hath the world no other Lords but thine? or is the demanding by no other name but *him*, sufficient to define whom thou demandest?

But such is the nature of thy love! It judgeth that no other should be entitled *Lord*, since the whole world is too little for thy Lord's possession; and that all creatures cannot choose but know him, since all the creatures of the world are too few to serve him.—And as his worth can requite all loves, and his love alone content all hearts, so thou deemest him to be so well worthy to be owner of all thoughts, that thou thinkest no thought can be well bestowed upon any other.

Yet thy speeches seem more sudden than sound—more peremptory than well pondered. Why dost thou say so resolutely, that if this gardener have taken him, thou wilt take him from him? Thou shouldst consider whether he took him from love or malice. If it were for love, thou mayest assure thyself that he will be as wary to keep, as he was venturous to obtain him, and therefore thy policy was weak, in saying thou

wouldst take him away, before thou knewest where he was, since none are so simple as to betray their treasure. If he took him out of love, thy offer to recover him is an open defiance, since malice is as obstinate in defending, as it is violent in offering wrong ; and he that would be cruel against thy Master's dead body, is likely to be more furious against his living disciple.

But thy love had no leisure to examine so many doubts. Thy tears were interpreters of thy words, and their innocent meaning was written in thy sorrowful countenance. Thine eyes were rather pleaders for pity, than heralds of wrath ; and thy whole person presented such a pattern of extreme anguish, that no man could have conceived any other impression from thy presence : and therefore what thy words wanted, thy action supplied ; and what his ear might mistake, his eye could understand.—It might be, also, that what he wrought in thy heart was concealed from thy sight ; and haply his voice and demeanour did impart such compassion of thy case, that he seemed as willing to afford, as thou wert desirous to have his help.—And so, presuming on his behaviour that thy suit would not suffer repulse, the tenor of thy request doth but argue thy hope of a grant.

But what is the reason, that in all thy speeches which, since the loss of thy Master, thou hast uttered, *where they have put him* always forms a part ? The same thou saidst once to the apostles, lately to the angels,

and now thou dost repeat it to this supposed gardener. Very sweet must this word be in thy heart, since it is so often on thy tongue; and it could never be so ready on thy lips, if it were not very fresh in thy memory.

But what wonder, that that should taste so sweet, which was first seasoned in thy Master's mouth? His lips were the treasury of truth, the fountain of life, and the choir of perfect harmony; so that whatsoever they delivered, thine ear devoured, and thy heart treasured up. And now that thou wantest himself, thou hast no other comfort than his words, which thou deemest so much the more effectual to persuade, as they derived their force from so heavenly a speaker. His sweetness, therefore, it is, that maketh this word so sweet; and for love of him thou repeatest it so often, because he, in a like case, said of thy brother, *Where have you put him?* O how much must thou love his person, when thou findest so sweet a feeling in his phrase! How much must thou desire to see his countenance, when thou pronoucest his words with such fervour! And how eagerly wouldst thou kiss his sacred feet, that dost so willingly utter his shortest speeches!

But what dost thou mean by forming so bold a resolution, and so resolutely to say, that thou wilt take him away? Joseph was afraid, and durst not take down his body from the cross but by night—yea, and

even then not without Pilate's warrant : but thou neither stayest until night, nor regardest Pilate, but stoutly declarest that thou thyself wilt take him away. Is thy courage so high above thy nature, thy strength so far beyond thy sex, and thy love so far above measure, that thou neither dost remember that all women are weak, nor that thyself art but a woman? Thou exemptest no place, thou preferrest no person ; thou speakest without fear, thou promisest without condition : as though nothing were impossible, if suggested by love.

But, as the darkness could not fright thee from setting forth before day, nor the watch prevent thy coming to the tomb ; as thou didst resolve to break open the seals, though with the danger of thy life, and to remove the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, though thy force should not serve thee ; what wonder, if thy love, being now more incensed for its loss, and stung with a fresh wound, should resolve upon any though never such strange extreme ?

Love is not controled by reason. It neither regardeth what can be, nor what shall be done, but only what itself desireth to do. No difficulty can daunt, no impossibility appal it. Love is title just enough, and armour strong enough, for all assaults, and is itself a sufficient reward for all labours. It asketh no recompense ; it expecteth no advantage. Love's fruits are love's effects, and its pains prove its gains : it con-

siders behoof more than benefit; and what of its duty it should, not what of its power it can.

But how can Nature be so mastered by affection, that thou canst take such delight in, and cherish such love to, a dead corse? How tenderly soever the mother loved her child when living, yet she cannot choose but loath it when dead. The most loving bride cannot endure the presence of her deceased spouse; and he whose embrace was delightful in life, becomes an object of horror after death. Yea, this is the nature of all, but principally of women, that the very conceit, much more the sight of the departed, fills them with fearful and appalling impressions, and stirr-eth in them so great a horror, that notwithstanding the most vehement love, they think it long till the house be rid of their very dearest friends, when once they are attired in death's unlovely livery.—Thy sister was unwilling that the grave of her own brother should be opened; and art thou not afraid to see the dead corse of thy Lord, to touch it, yea, to embrace and bear it naked in thy arms?

If thou hadst remembered God's promise, that *his holy one should not see corruption*—if thou hadst believed that his godhead, by remaining with his body, must have preserved it from perishing—thy faith had been more worthy of praise, but thy love less worthy of admiration; since the more corruptible thou didst conceive him, the more difficulties thou didst over-

come, and the greater was thy love in being able to conquer them. But thou wouldst have thought thine ointments rather harms than helps, if thou hadst been settled in that belief; and for so heavenly a corpse, all earthly spices would have seemed a disgrace. But if thou hadst firmly trusted in his resurrection, I should no longer have wondered at thy constant endeavours, since all hazards in gaining him would have been repaid with usury, if, lying in thy lap, thou mightst have seen him revive, and his disfigured and dead body become beautified in thine arms with a divine majesty.— If thou hadst hoped for so good a fortune to thy tearful eyes, that they might have been first cleared with the beams of his desired light, or that his eyes might have blessed thee with the first fruits of his glorious looks— if thou hadst imagined any likelihood to have made thy dying heart happy, by taking in the first gasps of his living breath, or to have heard the first words of his pleasing voice:—finally, if thou hadst thought to have seen his injuries turned to honours, the marks of his sufferings to ornaments of glory, and the depth of his heaviness to such a height of felicity, whatever thou hadst done to obtain him had been but too slender a price for so sovereign a treasure.

What meanest thou, then, O comfort of her life! to leave so constant a well-wisher so long uncomforted, and so severely to punish one who so well deserveth pardon? Dally no longer with so known a love,

which so many trials avouch to be so true ; and since there is nothing in her that is displeasing to thee, let her taste the benefit of being only thine. She did not follow the tide of thy better fortune, to shift sail when the stream did alter course ; she began not to love thee in thy life, and yet to leave thee after death ; neither was she such a guest at thy table, as to act the stranger in thy necessity. She left thee not in the lowest ebb ; she revolted not in the last extremity. In thy life, she served thee with her goods ; in thy death, she departed not from the Cross ; after death, she came to dwell with thee at thy grave. Why, then, dost thou not say with Naomi—*Blessed be the name of our Lord, because what courtesy she afforded to the quick, she hath also continued toward the dead.*

Do not, sweet Lord, any longer delay. Behold she hath attended thee these three days—she hath not what to eat, nor wherewith to foster her famished soul, unless thou, by discovering thyself to her, dost minister unto her the true bread, and provide her with the food that hath in it the taste of all sweetness. If, therefore, thou wilt not have her to faint on the way, refresh her with that which her hunger requireth, and at the same time restore the life of her soul.

But fear not, Mary—thy tears will prevail : they are too mighty orators to let any suit fail ; and though they were to plead at the most rigorous bar, yet have they so persuasive a silence, and so conquering a com-

plaint, that by yielding they overcome, and by entreating they command. They can chain the tongues of all accusers, and soften the rigour of the severest judge; yea, they can win the invincible, and bind the omnipotent. When they seem the most pitiful, they possess the greatest power; and when the most neglected, they are the most victorious. Penitent tears are sweetened by grace, and rendered more purely beautiful by returning innocence. It is the dew of devotion, which the sun of justice draweth up; and upon what face soever it falleth, it maketh it amiable in the eye of God.

Yes, these tears have better graced thy looks, than thy former alluring glances; they have settled worthier beauties in thy face than all thy artificial adornments. Yea, they have quenched the anger of God, appeased his justice, recovered his mercy, invited his love, purchased his pardon, and proved the spring of all thy favours.—Thy tears were the procurers of thy brother's life, the inviters of those angels for thy comfort, and the suitors that shall be rewarded with the first sight of thy revived Saviour. Rewarded they shall be, but not refrained; altered in their cause, but their course continued. In the mean time, raise up thy fallen hopes, and gather confidence both of thy speedy comfort, and thy Lord's well-being.—*Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turning, saith unto him, Rabboni, that is to say, Master.*

O, loving Master! thou didst only defer her consolation in order to increase it, that the delight of thy presence might be so much the more welcome, as, through thy long absence, it was much desired, and yet with so little hope. Thou wert pleased that for thee she should expend so many sighs, tears, and plaints, and didst purposely adjourn the date of her payment, to requite the length of the delay with a larger loan of joy. Perchance she knew not her former happiness till she had been weaned from it; nor had formed a right estimate of the treasures with which thy presence had enriched her, till her extreme poverty taught her their inestimable worth. But now thou shewest her, by sweetest experience, that though she repaid thee with her dearest tears, with her fondest sighs, and tenderest love, yet small was the price she bestowed in respect to the value she had received.—She sought thee dead, and imprisoned in the tomb, and now she findeth thee both alive and at full liberty. She sought thee enwrapped in a shroud, and now she findeth thee invested in the robes of glory, and both the owner and giver of all felicity.

Yes, all this while she hath sought thee without finding, wept without comfort, and called without receiving an answer: but now thou comest to satisfy her seeking with thy presence, her tears with thy triumph, and all her cries with this one word—*Mary!*—for when she heard thee call her in thy wonted manner,

and with thy usual voice, the mere sound of her name issuing from thy lips wrought a most sudden and strange alteration in her. By this single word her senses are retored, her mind enlightened, her heart quickened, and her soul revived. Yet what wonder, that with one word he should raise the sunken spirits of his poor disciple, since with a word he made the world, and even in this little word showeth the omnipotence of his power ?

Mary she was called, as well in her bad as in her reformed state ; and both her good and evil was all of Mary's working. And as Mary imports no less what she was, than what she is ; so is this one word, by his virtue that speaketh it, a repetition of all her miseries, an epitome of his mercies, and a memorial of all her better fortunes : and therefore it laid so general a discovery of herself before her eyes, that it awakened her most forgotten sorrows, and summoned together the whole multitude of her joys ; and would have left the issue of the conflict between them doubtful, had not the presence of her highest happiness decided the contest, and given her joys the victory.—As he was the sun of her soul, his going down left nothing but a gloomy night of fearful fancies, wherein no star of hope shone, and the brightest planets were changed into dismal signs ; but the serenity of his rising brought a calm and well-tempered day, that chased away all darkness, dispersed the clouds of melancholy,

and roused her from the lethargy of her astonished senses.

Ravished, therefore, with his voice, and impatient of delays, she taketh the words out of his mouth, and to his first, and yet only word, answered but one other, calling him *Rabboni!*—that is, Master. And then sudden joy rousing all other passions, she could no more proceed in her own, than give him leave to go forward with his speech. Love would have spoken, but fear enforced silence. Hope had framed words, but doubt melted them in the passage; and when her inward conceits strove for utterance, her voice trembled, her tongue faltered, her breath failed. In fine, tears issued in lieu of words, and deep sighs instead of long sentences; the eye supplying the tongue's default, and the heart forcing out the unsyllabled breath at once, which the conflict of her passions would not suffer to be sorted into the several sounds of intelligible speech.

Such is their state that are overcome with a surfeit of sudden joy, at the attaining of something vehemently desired: for as Desire is ever ushered in by Hope, and waited on by Fear, so is it credulous in entertaining conjectures, but hard in grounding a firm belief. And though it be ready to snatch at the least shadow of the comfort it wishes, yet the more vehement the desire, the more perfect the assurance it requires; and as long as this assurance is wanting, it is

rather an alarm to summon up all the passions, than a motive for quieting the desire. As Hope presumeth the best, and inviteth Joy to congratulate her on good success; so Fear suspecteth it too good to be true, and calleth up sorrow to bewail the uncertainty.

Mary, therefore, though she suddenly answered upon hearing his voice, yet because the novelty was so strange, his person so changed, his presence so unsuspected, and so many miracles laid at once before her wondering eyes, she found a sedition in her thoughts, till a more earnest view of him exempted them from all doubt. And then, though words would have broken out, and her heart sprung to the performance of the duty she owed him; yet, every thought striving first for utterance, and to have the first place in his gracious hearing, she was forced, as an indifferent arbitress among them, to seal them all up in silence, and to supply the want of words by more significant actions. She therefore ran to the haunt of her chiefest delight, and falling at his sacred feet, she offered to bathe them with tears of joy, and to sanctify her lips with kissing his once grievous, but now most glorious, wounds.

She staid not for any more words, being now made blessed by the Word himself; thinking it a greater benefit at once to feed all her wishes in the homage, honour, and embracing of his feet, than in hearing all that speech could utter.

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And as the nature of love coveteth not only to be united, but, if it were possible, to be wholly transformed out of itself into the thing it loveth; so doth it most affect that which most uniteth, and preferreth the least union before the most distant contentment. And therefore to see him, did not suffice her; to hear him, did not quiet her; to speak with him, was not enough for her; and except she might touch him, nothing could please her. But though she humbly fell down at his feet to kiss them, yet Christ forbade her, saying; *Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.*

O Jesu, what mystery is in this! When dead in sin, she touched thy mortal feet that were to die for her sake; and being now alive in grace, may she not touch thy glorious feet, that are no less revived for her benefit? She was once admitted to anoint thy head; and is she now unworthy of access to thy feet? Dost thou now command her from that, for which thou wert wont to commend her; and, by praising the deed, didst move her frequently to perform it? Since other women shall touch thee hereafter, why is she now rejected? What meanest thou, O Lord, by thus debarring her from so desired a duty? And since, among all thy disciples, thou hast vouchsafed her such a prerogative as to honour her eyes with thy first sight, and her ears with thy first words, why deny her the privilege of thy first embrace? If the multitude of her

tears have won so great a favour for her eyes, and her longing to hear thee so singular a recompense for her ears, why dost thou not admit her hands to touch, and her lips to kiss, thy holy feet, since the one with many plights, and the other, with their readiness to all services, seem to have earned no less a reward. But notwithstanding all this, thou preventest the effect of the offer, by forbidding her to touch thee; as if thou hadst said—"O Mary, know the difference between a glorious and a mortal body—between the condition of a momentary, and of an eternal life: for since the immortality of the body, and the glory both of the body and the soul, are the endowments of a heavenly inhabitant, and the rights of another world, think not this favour to seem ordinary, nor leave to touch me a common thing. It were not so great a wonder to see the stars fall from their spheres, and the sun forsake the heavens and come within the reach of a mortal arm, as for me, that am not only a saint, but the Sovereign of saints, and the sun whose beams are the angels' bliss, to show myself visible to the pilgrims of this world, and to display eternal beauties to corruptible eyes. Though I be not yet ascended to my Father, I shall shortly ascend; and therefore measure not thy demeanour towards me by the place where I am, but by that which is due unto me, and then thou wilt rather fall down afar off with reverence, than presume to touch me with such familiarity. Dost thou not believe

my former promises? Hast thou not a constant proof by my present words? Are not thine eyes and ears sufficient testimonies? Must thou also have thy hands and lips witnesses of my presence?—Touch me not, Mary, for if I deceive thy sight, or delude thy hearing, I can as easily beguile thy hand, and frustrate thy feeling. If I be true in any one thing, believe me so in all. Embrace me first in a firm faith, and then thou shalt touch me with more worthy hands. It is now necessary to wean thee from the comfort of my external presence, that thou mayest learn to lodge in me the secrets of my heart, and teach thy thoughts to supply the offices of the outward senses: for in this visible shape I am not long to be seen here, being shortly to ascend unto my Father. But what thine eye then seeth not, thy heart shall feel, and my silent parley will find audience in thy inward ear. Yet if thou fearest lest my ascending should be so sudden, that if thou dost not now take leave of my feet with thy humble kisses and loving tears, thou shalt never find the like opportunity again; expel from thee that needless suspicion. I am not yet ascended unto my Father, and for all such duties there will be a more convenient time. But now, go about that which requireth more haste, and run to my brethren, and inform them what I say, *That I will go before them into Galilee; there shall they see me.*"

Mary, therefore, preferring her Lord's will before

her own wish, yet sorry that her will was unworthy of no better event, departed from him like a hungry infant forced from a full breast, or a thirsty hart chased from a sweet fountain. She judged herself but an unlucky messenger, though of most joyful tidings, being banished from her Master's presence, to carry news of his resurrection. Alas! said she, and cannot others be happy, without my unhappiness? or cannot their advantage be gained but through my loss?—Must the dawning of their day be the close of mine, and my soul be robbed of such a treasure, in order to enrich them? Oh, my heart! return thou to enjoy him. Why goest thou with me, that am forced to go from him? In me, thou art but in prison; in him, is thy only paradise. I have buried thee long enough in former sorrows, and yet now when thou wert half revived, I am constrained to carry thee from the spring of life. Alas! go seek to better thy life in some more happy breast, since I, ill deserving creature! am nothing different from what I was, but in having taken a taste of the highest delight, that the knowledge and want of it might drown me in the deepest misery.

Thus duty leading, and love withholding her, she goeth as fast backward in thought, as forward in pace; ready to faint for grief, but that a firm hope see him again supported her weakness. She often turned towards the tomb to breathe, deeming the very

air that came from the place where he stood to have derived a virtue from his presence, and to possess a refreshing force above the course of nature. Sometimes she forgetteth herself, and love entranceth her in a golden distraction, making her to imagine that her Lord is present; and then she seemeth to ask him questions, and to hear his answers: she dreameth that his feet are in her folded arms, and that he giveth her soul a full repast of his comforts. But, alas! when she cometh to herself, and findeth it but an illusion, she is so much the more sorry, that if the mere imagination is so delightful, she was not worthy to enjoy the reality. And when she passes by those places where her Master had been—O, ye stones, saith she, how much happier are ye than I, most wretched creature! since to you was not denied the touch of those blessed feet, whereof my evil deserts have now made me unworthy. Alas! what crime have I of late committed, that hath thus cancelled me out of his good conceit, and estranged me from his accustomed courtesy? Had I but a lease of his love, for the term of his earthly life? or did my interest in his affections expire with his decease? It was by embracing his feet that I first found entrance into his favour; by which I was graciously entertained in his heart, and admitted to do homage to his person, which was then a mortal mirror of immortal majesty—an earthly epitome of heavenly wisdom—containing in man a God's felicity.

But, alas ! I must be contented to bear a lower sail, and to abase my desires to far humbler hopes, since former favours are marks too high for me to aim at.—O, mine eyes, why are ye so ambitious of heavenly honours ? He is now too bright a sun for so weak a sight : your looks are limited to meaner light ; you have the vision of the bat, not the glance of the eagle ; you must humble yourselves to the twilight of inferior things, and measure your views by your slender substance. Gaze not too much upon the blaze of eternity, lest you lose yourself in too much self-delight—lest, being too curious in inspecting his majesty, you be, in the end, oppressed with his glory. No, no—since I am rejected from the embrace of his feet, how can I otherwise presume, but that my want of faith has dislodged me out of his heart, and thrown me out of all possession of his mind and memory.—Yet why should I stoop to so base a fear ? When want of faith was added to a want of all goodness, he disdained not to accept me for one of his number ; and shall I now think that he will so rigorously abandon me, on account of my faint belief ? And is the sincerity of my love, wherein he hath no partner, of so slender account, that it may not hope for some little regard of his wonted mercy ? I will not wrong him with so unjust a suspicion, since his appearance disproveth it, his words overthrow it, and his countenance dissuadeth

it; why, then, should I draw so much sorrow out of so vain a surmise?

Thus Mary's fancies, wavering between the joy of her vision and the grief of her denial, entertained her in the way, and held her parley with such discourses as are incident unto minds in which neither hope is entirely master of the field, nor fear hath received an utter overthrow. But as she was in this perplexed state, now falling, now rising in her own uncertainties, she findeth on the way the other holy woman that first came with her to the grave, whom the angels had now assured of Christ's resurrection.

And as they all passed forwards toward the disciples, *Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. But they came near, and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said unto them, Fear not. Go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see me.*

O Lord, how profound are thy judgments, how unsearchable thy counsels! Doth her sorrow sit so near thy heart, or thy repulse rebound with such regret by seeing her wounded love bleed so fast, that thy late refusal must so soon be requited by so free a grant? Is it thy pity, or her change, which cannot allow that she should any longer fast from her earnest longing?

But, O most mild Physician, well knowest thou that thy sharp corrosive angered her tender wound, which

being rather caused by unwitting ignorance than wilful error, was as soon cured as known; and therefore thou quickly appliest a sweet lenitive to assuage her pain, that she might feel her repulse to be rather a fatherly check to her unsettled faith, than an austere rejection for any fault; and therefore thou admittest her to kiss thy feet—those two conduits of grace, and seals of our redemption—renewing her a charter of thy unchanged love, and accepting from her the sacrifice of her sanctified soul.

And thus, gracious Lord, hast thou quieted her fears, assured her hopes, fulfilled her desires, satisfied her love, dried up her tears, perfected her joy, and made the period of her expiring griefs the preamble to her never-ending pleasures.—O, how merciful a Father thou art to friendless orphans, how lenient a Judge to repentant sinners, and how faithful a friend to sincere lovers! How true it is, that thou never leavest those that love thee, and thou lovest such as rest their affiance in thee! They will find thee liberal above their desert, and bountiful beyond their hope—a measurer of thy gifts, not by their merits, but by thine own mercy.

O Christian soul! take Mary for thy mirror; follow her affection, that like effects may follow thy own. Learn, O sinful man, of this once sinful woman, that sinners may find Christ, if their sins be amended. Learn, that whom sin loseth, love recovereth; whom

faintness of faith chaseth away, firmness of hope recalleth; and that which no other mortal force, favour or policy can compass, the continued tears of a constant love are able to attain. Learn of Mary, for Christ to fear no encounters; out of Christ, to desire no comfort; and with the love of Christ, to over-rule the love of all things. Rise early in the morning of thy good resolves, and let them not sleep in sloth, when diligence may perform them. Run, with repentance, to thy sinful heart, which should have been a temple, but through thy fault has proved no better than a tomb for Christ; since, having no life in thee to feel him, he seemed to thee as if he had been dead. —Roll away the stone of thy former hardness, remove all the heavy loads that oppress thee in sin, and look into thy soul whether thou canst there find the Lord. If he be not within thee, stand weeping without, and seek him till he be found. Let faith be thine eye, hope thy guide, and love thy light. Seek him, and not his: seek him for himself, and not for his gifts.—Though to thy faith he be under a cloud, let thy hope no less perseveringly seek him. If hope have led thee to find him, let love urge thee the further to seek into him. To move in thee a desire to find, his goods are precious; and to keep thee in a desire to seek, his treasures are infinite. Absent, he must be sought to be had; being had, he must be sought to be the more enjoyed. Seek him truly, and no other for him;

seek him purely, and no other with him ; seek him only, and nothing beside him. And if at the first search he appear not, think it not much to persevere in tears, and to continue thy seeking. Stand upon the earth, treading under thee all courtly vanities, and touching them with no more than the soles of thy feet—that is, with the lowest and least part of thy affections. To look the better into the tomb, bow down thy neck to the yoke of humility, and stoop from lofty and proud conceits, that thy humbled and lowly looks may find him whom swelling and haughty thoughts have driven away. A submissive soul the soonest wins his return ; and the deeper it sinks in self abasement, the higher it climbeth to his highest favours. And if thou perceivest in the tomb of thy heart the presence of his two messengers—Sorrow for the bad that is past, and Desire for the better that is to come—entertain them with sighs, and welcome them with penitent tears ! Yet, reckoning them but as the harbingers of the Lord, cease not thy seeking till thou hast found himself ; and if he vouchsafe thee his glorious sight, offering himself to thy inward eyes, presume not of thyself to be able to know him, but, as his unworthy suppliant, lay thy petitions at his feet, that thou mayest truly discern him, and faithfully serve him.— Thus, preparing thyself with diligence, hastening with speed, standing with high-lifted hopes, and stooping with inclined heart, if, with Mary, thou cravest no

other solace of Jesus but Jesus himself, he will answer thy tears with his presence, and assure thee of his presence with his own words ; that having seen him thyself, thou mayest make him known to others—saying, with Mary ; *I have seen our Lord, and these things he said unto me.*

THE

Triumphs over Death ;

OR,

A CONSOLATORY EPISTLE

For afflicted Minds in the Effects of dying Friends.

First written for the Consolation of One ;

But now published for the general Good of all,

BY R. SOUTHWELL.

TO THE READER.

IF the Athenians erected an altar to an unknown God, supposing he would be pleased with their devotion, though they were ignorant of his name; better may I presume that my labour may be grateful, being devoted to such men, whose names I know, and whose fame I have heard, though unacquainted with their persons. I intended this comfort to him, whom a lamenting sort hath left most comfortless; by him to his friends, who have equal portions in this sorrow.—But I think the philosopher's rule will be here verified, that it shall be last in execution, which was first designed; and that he shall last enjoy the effect, who was first owner of the cause. Thus let chance be our rule, since choice may not, and into which of their hands it shall fortune, much honour and happiness may it carry with it, and leave in their hearts as much joy as it found sorrow! Where I borrow the person of a History, as well touching the dead, as the yet surviving, I build upon report of such authors whose hoary heads challenge credit, and whose eyes and ears were witnesses of their words. To crave pardon for my pain,

were to slander a friendly office, and to wrong their courtesies whom nobility never taught to answer affection with anger, or to wage duty with dislike ; and therefore I humbly present it unto them, with as many good wishes as good-will can measure from the best-meaning mind, that hath a willingness rather to afford than to offer due service, were not the mean as worthless as the mind is willing.

R. S.

The Triumphs ober Death.

IF it be a blessing for the virtuous to mourn, it is a reward of the same to be comforted; and he that pronounced the one, promised the other. I doubt not but that Spirit, whose nature is Love, and whose name Comforter, as he knows the cause of your grief, so hath he salved it with supplies of grace, pouring into your wound no less oil of mercy, than wine of justice: yet since courtesy oweth compassion as a duty to the afflicted, and Nature hath ingrafted a desire to find it, I thought good to show you, by proof, that you carry not your cares alone, though the load that lieth on others can little lighten your burthen. Her decease cannot but sit nearer your heart, whom you had taken so deep into a most tender affection.

That which dieth to our love being always alive to our sorrow, you would have been kind to a less loving sister: yet finding in her so many worths to be loved, your love wrought more earnestly upon so sweet a subject, which now being taken from you, I presume

your grief is no less than your love was ; the one of these being ever the measure of the other. The Scripture moveth us to bring forth our tears on the dead—a thing not offending grace, and a right to reason ; for to be without remorse in the death of friends is neither incident nor convenient to the nature of man, having too much affinity to a savage temper, and overthrowing the ground of all pity, which is a mutual sympathy in each others' miseries. But as not to feel sorrow in sorrowful chances is to want sense, so, not to bear it with moderation is to want understanding—the one brutish, the other effeminate ; and he hath cast his account best, that hath brought his sum to the mean.

It is no less a fault to exceed in sorrow, than to pass the limits of competent mirth, since excess in either is a disorder in passion ; though that sorrow of courtesy be less blamed of men, because if it be a fault, it is also a punishment—at once causing and tasting torments. It is no good sign in the sick to be senseless in their pains ; as bad it is to be unusually sensitive—both being either harbingers or attendants of Death. Let sadness, since it is a due to the dead, testify a feeling of pity, not a pang of passion, and betray rather a tender than a dejected mind. Mourn so that your friends may find you a living brother, all men a discreet mourner ; making sorrow a signal, not a superior of reason. Some are so obstinate in their own

will, that even time, the natural remedy of the most violent agonies, cannot by any delays assuage their grief. They entertain their sorrow with solitary musings, and feed their sighs and tears; they pine their bodies, and draw all pensive consideration to their minds, nursing their heaviness with a melancholy humour, as though they had vowed themselves to sadness; unwilling it should end till it had ended them, wherein their folly sometimes findeth a ready effect:—that being true which Solomon observed, *that as a moth the garment, and a worm the wood, so doth sadness pervade the heart.* But this impotent softness fitteth not sober minds. We must not make a life's profession of a se'nnight's duty, nor under colour of kindness to others, be unnatural to ourselves. If some, in their passion, adjourn their thoughts into such labyrinths that neither wit knoweth, nor will careth how long or how far they wander in them, it discovereth their weakness, but exerciseth our meditation. It is for the most part the fault, not of all, but of the silliest women, who, next to the funeral of their friends, deem it a second widowhood to force their tears, and make it their happiness to seem most unhappy; as tho' they had only been left alive, to be a perpetual map of dead folks' misfortunes. But this is to arm an enemy against ourselves, and to yield Reason prisoner to Passion—putting the sword in the rebel's hand, when we are least able to withstand his treason.

Sorrow, once settled, is not lightly removed; easily winning, but not so easily surrendering possession; and where it is not excluded in time, it challengeth a place by prescription. The Scripture warneth us not to give our hearts to sadness, as men without hope, but rather, to reject it as a thing not beneficial to the dead, yea, prejudicial to ourselves. Ecclesiasticus alloweth but seven days to mourning, judging moderation in plaint to be a sufficient testimony of good-will, and a needful office of wisdom. Much sorrow for the dead is either the child of self-love or rash judgment. If we shed our tears for the death of others as a mean to our contentment, we show but our own wound—perfect lovers of ourselves: if we lament their decease as their hard destiny, we attach them of evil deserving with too peremptory a censure, as though their life had been a rise, and their death a leap into final perdition: for otherwise, a good departure craveth small condoling, being but a harbour from storms, and an entrance into felicity.

✓ But you know your sister too well, to incur any blame in these respects; and experience of her life hath stored you thoughts with notice of such rare virtues, as might sooner make her memory an enforcement to joy, than any inducement to sorrow, and move you to esteem her last duties, rather the triumph of her victory, than the farewells of her decease. She was by birth second to none but unto the first of the

realm, yet she only measured greatness by goodness, making nobility but the mirror of virtue, as able to show things worthy to be seen, as apt to draw many eyes to behold it. She suited her behaviour to her birth, and ennobled her birth by her piety ; leaving her house more beholden to her for having honoured it with the glory of her virtues, than she was to it for the titles of her degree. She was high-minded in nothing but in aspiring to perfection, and in the disdain of vice ; in other things covering her greatness with humility among her inferiors, and showing it with courtesy among her peers. x

Of the carriage of herself, and her sober government, it may be a sufficient testimony that Envy herself was dumb in her dispraise, finding in her much to repine at, but nought to reprove. The clearness of her honour I need not mention, she having always armed it with such modesty, as taught the most intemperate tongues to be silent in her presence, and answered their eyes with scorn and contempt that did but seem to make her an aim to passion ; yea, and in this behalf, as almost in all others, she hath the most honourable and renowned ladies of the land, so common and known witnesses, that those that least loved her religion, were in love with her demeanour, delivering their opinions in open praises. How mildly she accepted the check of fortune fallen upon her without desert, experience hath been a most manifest proof ;

the temper of her mind being so easy, that she found little difficulty in taking down her thoughts to a mean degree, which true honour, not pride, hath raised to the former height. Her faithfulness and love, where she found true friendship, is written with tears in many eyes, and will be longer registered in the grateful memories of divers that have tried her in that kind, avowing her, for secrecy, wisdom, and constancy, to be a miracle of the sex: yea, when she found least kindness in others, she never lost it in herself; more willingly suffering than offering wrong, and often weeping for their mishaps, whom, though less loving her, she could not but affect.

Of the innocency of her life, this generally each one can aver, that as she was grateful many ways, and memorable for virtues, so was she free from all blemish of any vice: using, to her power, the best means to keep continually an undefiled conscience. Her attire was ever such as might satisfy a curious eye, and yet bear witness of a sober mind; neither singular nor vain, but such as her peers of best report used. Her tongue was very little acquainted with oaths, unless either duty or distrust did enforce them; and surely they were needless to those that knew her, to whom the truth of her words could not justly be suspected: much less was she noted for any unfitting talk, which, as it was ever hateful to her ears, so did it never defile her breath. Of food she was very measurable, being of rather

too sparing than too liberal a diet. So religious for observing of fasts, that even in her sickness she could hardly be won to break them ; and if our souls be possessed in our patience, surely her soul was truly her own, whose rock, though often stricken with the rod of adversity, never yielded any more than to give issue of eye-streams. And though these, through the tenderness of her nature, and aptness of her sex, were the customary tributes that her love paid, more to her friends' than her own misfortunes, yet were they not accompanied with distempered words, or ill-seeming actions ; reason never forgetting decency, though remembering pity.

Her devotions she duly observed, offering the daily sacrifice of an innocent heart, and stinting herself to her times of prayer, which she performed with so religious a care, as well showed that she knew how high a Majesty she served. I need not write how dutifully she discharged all the behoofs of a most loving wife, since that was the commonest theme of her praise : yet this may be said without improof to any, that whosoever in this behalf may be counted her equal, none can justly be thought her superior. Where she owed, she paid duty ; where she found, she returned courtesy. Wheresoever she was known, she deserved amity ; desirous of the best, yet disdainning none but evil company. She was readier to requite benefits, than revenge wrongs ; more grieved than angry with the unkindness

of friends, when either mistake or misreport occasioned any breaches : for if their words carry credit, it entered deepest into her thoughts. They have acquitted her of all spice of malice, not only against her friends, whose dislikes were but a retire to slip further into friendship, but even against her greatest enemies, to whom if she had been a judge as she was a suppliant, I assuredly think she would have redressed, not revenged her wrongs. In a word, she was an honour to her predecessors, a light to her age, and a pattern to posterity. Neither was her conclusion different from her promises, or her death from her life. She showed no dismay on being warned of her danger, carrying in her conscience the safe conduct of innocency. But, having sent her desires to Heaven before her, with a mild countenance and a most calm mind, in more hope than fear, she expected her own passage. She commended both her duty and good-will to all her friends, and cleared her heart from all grudge towards her enemies, wishing true happiness to them both, as best became so soft and gentle a mind, in which anger never staid but as an unwelcome stranger.

She made open profession that she died true to her religion, true to her husband, true to her God and the world. She enjoyed her judgment as long as she breathed, her body earnestly offering her last devotions, and supplying in thought what faintness suffered not her tongue to utter. In the end, when her glass was run

out, and Death began to challenge his interest, some labouring with too late remedies to hinder the delivery of her sweet soul, she desired them oft-times to let her go to God ; and her hopes calling her to eternal kingdoms, as one rather falling asleep than dying, she most happily took her leave of all mortal miseries.

Such was the life, such was the death, of your dearest sister—both so full of true comfort, that surely this of her virtues may be a sufficient lenitive to your bitterest griefs : for you are not, I hope, in the number of those that reckon it a part of their pain to hear of their best remedies, thinking the rehearsal of their dead friends' praises an upbraiding of their loss. But since the oblivion of her virtues were injurious to her, let not the mention of her person be offensive to you, and be not grieved with her death, with which she is best pleased. So blessed a death is rather to be wished by us, than pitied in her, whose soul triumpheth with God, whose virtue still breatheth in the mouths of infinite praises, and liveth in the memories of all to whom experience made her known, or from whom fame was not envious to conceal her deserts. She was a jewel that both God and you desired to enjoy—he, to her assured benefit, without self-interest ; you, for allowable respects, yet enforcing her restraint among certain hazards and most uncertain hopes.

Be, then, umpire in your own cause, whether your wishes or God's will importeth more love—the one, the

adornment of her exile ; the other, her return into a most blessed country. And since it pleased God in this love to be your rival, let your discretion decide the doubt, who in due should carry the suit, the prerogative being but a right to the one : for nature and grace being the motives of both your loves, he had the best title in them that was author of them ; and she, if worthy to be beloved of either, as she was of both, could not but prefer him to the dearest portion of her deepest affection. Let him, with good leave, gather the grape of his own vine, and pluck the fruit of his own planting, and think such curious works ever safest in the artificer's hand, who is likeliest to love them, and best able to preserve them.— She therefore did her duty in dying willingly ; and if you will do yours, you must be willing with her death ; since to repine at her liking is discourtesy ; at God's, an impiety ; both unfitting for your approved virtue. Being in a place where no grief can annoy her, she hath little need, and less joy of your sorrow ; neither can she allow in her friends what she would loathe in herself, love ever affecting likeness. If she had been evil, she had not deserved our tears ; being good, she cannot desire them : nothing being less to the likeness of goodness than to see itself any cause of unjust disquiet or trouble to the innocent. Would Saul have thought it friendship to have wept for his fortune, in having found a kingdom while seeking for

cattle? or David accounted it a courtesy to have sorrowed at his success, that from following sheep, came to foil a giant, and to receive, in fine, a royal crown for his victory? Why, then, should her lot be lamented, whom higher favour hath raised from the dust, to sit with the princes of God's people. If security had been given that a longer life should still have been guided by virtue, and followed by good fortune, you might pretend some cause to complain of her decease: but if different effects should have crossed your hopes, (process of time being the parent of strange alteration) then had Death been friendlier than yourself; and since it hung in suspence, which of the two would have happened, let us allow God so much discretion as to think him the fittest arbitrator in decision of the doubt. Her foundations of happiness were in the holy hills, and God saw it fittest for her building to be but low in the vale of tears; and better it was it should be soon taken down, than, by rising too high, to have oppressed her soul with the ruins.

Think it no injury that she is now taken from you, but a favour that she was lent you so long; and show no unwillingness to restore God his own, since hitherto you have paid no usury for it. Consider not how much longer you might have enjoyed her, but how much sooner you might have lost her; and since she was held upon courtesy, not by any covenant, take our Sovereign's right for a sufficient reason of her death.—

Our life is but lent ; a good whereof to make, during the loan, our best commodity. It is a debt due to a more certain owner than ourselves, and therefore so long as we have it, we receive a benefit ; when we are deprived of it, we suffer no wrong. We are tenants at will of this clayey farm, not for any term of years ; when we are warned out, we must be ready to remove, having no other title but the owner's pleasure. It is but an inn, not a home ; we came but to bait, not to dwell ; and the condition of our entrance was finally to depart. If this departure be grievous, it is also common : this to-day to me, to-morrow to thee ; and the case equally affecting all, leaves none any cause to complain of injurious usage.

Nature's debt is sooner exacted of some than of others ; yet is there no fault in the creditor, who exacteth but, his own, but in the greediness of our eager hopes, either repining that their wishes fail, or willingly forgetting the mortality of those whom they are unwilling, by experience, to see mortal. Yet the general tide wafteth all passengers to the same shore—some sooner, some later, but all at the last ; and we must settle our minds to take our course as it cometh, never fearing a thing so necessary, yet ever expecting a thing so uncertain. It seemeth that God purposely concealed the time of our death, leaving us suspended between fear and hope of longer continuance. Cut off unripe cares, lest, with the notice and pensiveness of

Our divorce from the world, we should lose the comforts of needful contentments, and before our dying day languish away with expectation of death. Some are taken in their first step into this life, receiving at once their welcome and farewell, as though they had been born only to be buried, and to take their passport in this hourly middle of their course—the good, to prevent change; the bad, to shorten their impiety.—Some live till they be weary of life, to give proof of their good hap that had a kindlier passage; yet tho' the date be divers, the debt is all one, equally to be answered of all, as their time expireth: for who is the man that shall live, and not see death, since we all die, and like water slide into the earth?

In paradise we received the sentence of death; and here, as prisoners, we are kept immured, tarrying but our time till the gaoler call us to our execution.—Whom hath any virtue eternized, or desert commended to posterity, that hath not mourned in life, and been mourned after death—no assurance of joy being sealed without some tears? Even the blessed Virgin, the mother of God, was thrown down as deep in temporal miseries, as she was advanced high in spiritual honours; none amongst all mortal creatures finding in life more proof than she of her mortality. For tho' she had the noblest son that ever woman was mother of, not only above the condition of men, but above the glory of angels; being her son only, without temporal father,

and thereby doubling the love of both parents in her breast ; being her only son without other issue, and so comprising her love of all children in him ; yea, tho' he was God, and she the nearest creature to God's perfections, no prerogative either acquitted her from mourning, or him from dying ; and though they surmounted the highest angels in all pre-eminences, yet were they equal with the meanest men in the sentence of death. And howbeit the blessed Virgin, being the pattern of Christian mourners, so tempered her anguish, that there was neither any thing undone that might be exacted of a mother, nor any thing done that might be disliked in so perfect a matron ; yet by this we may guess with what courtesies Death is likely to befriend us, that durst cause such bloody funerals in so heavenly a stock—not exempting him from the law of dying who was the author of life, and who was soon after to honour his triumphs with the ruins and spoils of death.

Seeing, therefore, that Death spareth none, let us spare our tears for better uses, it being but an idol-sacrifice to this deaf and implacable executioner. And for this, Nature did promise us a weeping life, exacting tears for custom at our first entrance, and suiting our whole course to this doleful beginning ; therefore they must be used with measure that must be used so often ; and as so many causes of weeping lie yet in the debt, since we cannot end our tears, let us at the least reserve them. If sorrow cannot be shunned, let it be

taken in time of need ; since otherwise being both troublesome and fruitless, it is a double misery or an open folly. We moisten not the ground with precious waters—they were stilled to nobler ends ; either by their fruits to delight our senses, or by their operation to preserve our health. Our tears are water of too high a price, to be prodigally poured in the dust of any graves. If they be tears of love, they perfume our prayers, making them the odour of sweetness fit to be offered on the altar before the throne of God ;—if tears of contrition, they are the water of life to dying and corrupting souls. They may purchase favour, and repeal the sentence till it be executed, as the example of Ezechiah doth testify : but when the punishment is past, and the verdict performed in effect, their pleading is in vain ; as David taught us, when his child was dead, saying ; that he was likelier to go to it, than it, by his weeping, to return to him.—Learn, therefore, to give sorrow no long dominion over you.

The wise should rather mark than expect the approach of woe. Meet it not when it cometh ; do not invite it when it is absent. When you feel it do not force it, since the brute creatures (which Nature, seldom erring in her course, guideth in the mean) have but a short though vehement sense of their loss. You should bury the sharpness of your grief with the corse, and rest contented with a kind yet mild compassion, neither less than decent for you, nor more than agree-

able to your nature and judgment. Over-much heaviness would renew a multitude of griefs, and your eyes would be springs to many streams, adding to the memory of the dead a new occasion of plaint by your own discomfort. The motion of your heart measureth the beating of many pulses, which, in any distemper of your quiet, with the like stroke will soon betray themselves sick of your disease. Your fortune, tho' hard, yet is it notorious; and though moved in mishap, and set in an unworthy lantern, yet your own light shineth far, and maketh you remarkable. Every one will bend an attentive eye upon you, observing how you ward this blow of temptation, and whether your patience be a shield of proof, or easily entered with these violent strokes. It is commonly expected that such high thoughts, as have already climbed over the hardest dangers, should not now stoop to any vulgar or female complaints. Great personages, whose estate draweth upon them many eyes, as they cannot but be themselves, so may they not use the liberty of meaner estates; the laws of nobility not allowing them to direct their deeds by their desires, but to limit their desires to that which is decent.

Nobility is an aim for lower degrees to level at as marks of higher perfection, and like stately windows in the north-east rooms of politic and civil buildings, to let in such light, and lie open to such prospects, as may enable their inferiors both to find means and motives to

heroical virtues. Should you determine to dwell for ever in sorrow, it were a wrong to your wisdom, and countermanded by your quality. If ever you mind to surcease it, no time fitter than the present, since the same reasons that hereafter might move you, are now as much in force. Yield to wisdom that which you must yield to time. Be beholden to yourself, not to time, for the victory. Make it a voluntary work of discretion, that will otherwise be a necessary work of delay. We think it not enough to have our own measure brim full with evil, unless we make it run over with other's miseries; taking their misfortune as our punishment, and executing foreign penalties upon ourselves. Yea, disquiet minds oft-times mistake others' good for ill, their folly making it a true scourge to them, howsoever it seemed it was to their benefit. Jacob out of Joseph's absence gathered such surmise, that he made his heart a prey to his agonies: whereas that which buried him in his own melancholy, raised Joseph to his highest happiness. If Mary Magdalen said, and supposed she could have sunk no deeper in grief than she had already plunged herself, and yet that which she imagined the uttermost of her evils, proved, in conclusion, the very bliss of her wishes; the like may be your error, if you encumber your mind with thinking upon her decease, who could never be discharged from cares, till Death set his hand to her acquittance; nor receive the charter of an

eternal being till her soul were present at the sealing. I loathe to rub the scar of a deeper wound, for fear of renewing a dead discomfort ; yet if you will favour your own remedies, the mastery over that grief which springs from the root, may learn you to qualify this that buddeth from the branch. Let not her losses move you, who are acquainted with greater of your own, and are taught by experience to know how uncertain their change is, for whom inconstant Fortune throweth the dice.

If she want the wonted titles, her part is now ended, and they were due but upon the stage. Her loss therein is but a wrack of words, in which she is but even with the height of princes ; surpassing all her former titles by the new honours of her heavenly stile. If she have left her children, it was her wish that they should repay her absence with usury : yet had she sent her first-fruits before her, as pledges of her own coming ; and now may we say, that the sparrow hath found a home, and the turtle-dove a nest wherein she may lay her younglings, enjoying some, and expecting the rest. If she be taken from her friends, she is also delivered from her enemies ; in hope hereafter to enjoy the first, and out of fear of ever being troubled with the latter. If she be cut off in her youth, no age is unripe for a good death ; and having ended her task, though never so short, she hath lived out her full time.

Old age is venerable, not long ; to be measured by

increase of virtues, not by number of years ; for gravity consisteth in wisdom, and an unspotted life is the ripeness of the perfectest age. If she were in possibility of preferment, she could hardly have mounted higher than from whence she was thrown. Having been bruised with the first, she had little will to climb for a second fall. We might hitherto truly have said, this is that Naomi, she being to her end enriched with many outward, and more inward graces. But whether hereafter she would have bid us not to call her *Naomi*, or, *fair*, but *Mora*, that signifies *bitter*, is uncertain, since she might have fallen into the widow's felicity, who thus changed her name to the likeness of her lot. Inasmuch as she is freed from more miseries than she suffered losses, and more fortunate by not desiring, than she would have been by enjoying fortune's favour, (which, if it be not counted folly to love, yet is it a true happiness not to need,) we may rather think that Death was provided against her imminent harms, than envious of any future prosperities ; the times being great with so many broils, that when they once fall in labour, we shall think their condition securest whom absence hath exempted, both from feeling the bitter throes, and beholding the monstrous issue that they are likely to bring forth. The more you tender her, the more temperate should be your grief, since, seeing you upon going, she did but step before you into the next world, to which she thought you to belong more than to this,

which hath already given you the most ungrateful congee.

They that are upon removing, send their furniture before them; and you, still standing upon your departure, what ornament could you rather wish, in your future abode, than this that did ever please you?—God thither sendeth your adamants whither he would draw your heart, and casteth your anchors where your thoughts should lie at road; that seeing your love taken out of the world, and your hopes disanchored from the stormy shore, you might settle your desires where God seemeth to require them. If you would have wished for her life as an example to your house, assure yourself she hath left her friends so inherited with her virtues, and such perfect patterns of her best part, that they who know the survivors may see the deceased, and find little difference, except in the number, which before was greater, but not better, unless it were in one other repetition of the same goodness. Wherefore set yourself at rest in the ordinance of God, whose works are perfect, and whose wisdom is infinite. The terms of our life are like the seasons of the year, some for sowing, some for growing, and some for reaping; in this only different, that as the heavens keep their prescribed periods, so the succession of times have their appointed changes. But in the seasons of our life, which are not according to the law of necessary causes, some are reaped in the seed, some in the blade, some in the

unripe ear, all in the end, this harvest depending upon the reaper's will.

Death is too ordinary a thing to seem any novelty, being a familiar guest in every house. Since his coming is expected, and his errand not unknown, neither should his presence be feared; nor his effects lamented. What wonder is it to see the fuel burned, the spice pounded, or the snow melted? and as little fear it is to see those dead, that were born upon condition once to die. She was such a compound as was once to be resolved unto its simples; this is now performed, her soul being given to God, and her body restored to its first elements. It could not displease you, to see your friend removed out of a ruinous house, and the house itself destroyed and pulled down, if you knew it were to be built in a statelier form, and to transfer the inhabitant with more joy into a fairer lodging. Let then your sister's soul depart without grief; let her body also be altered into dust; withdraw your eyes from the ruin of this cottage, and cast them upon the majesty of the second building, which St. Paul, saith, shall be incorruptible, glorious, strange, spiritual, and immortal.

Night and sleep are perpetual mirrors, figuring, in their darkness, their silence, and the shutting up of the senses, the final end of our mortal bodies; and for this some have intituled sleep the eldest brother of death: but with no less convenience it might be called one of death's tenants, near unto him in affinity of condition,

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yet far inferior in right, being but the tenant for a time of that, of which death is the inheritor: for, by virtue of the conveyance made unto him in Paradise, that dust we are, and to dust we must return, he hath hitherto shewn his seigniority over all, exacting of us not only the yearly, but hourly reverence of time, which ever by minutes we defray unto him: so that our very life is not only a memory, but a part of our death, since the longer we have lived, the less we have to live. What is the daily lessening of our life, but a continual dying: and therefore none is more grieved with the running out of the last sand in an hour glass, than with all the rest: so should not the end of the last hour trouble us any more, than of so many that went before, since that did but finish the course which all the rest were still ending. Not the quantity but the quality commendeth our life; the ordinary gain of long lives being only a greater burthen of sin. For as in tears, so in life, the value is not esteemed by the length but by the fruit and goodness, which often is more in the least than in the longest. What your sister wanted in continuance, she supplied in speed; and as with her needle she wrought more in a day than many ladies in a year, having both excellent skill, and no less delight in working: so with her diligence doubling her endeavours, she won more virtue in half, than others in a whole life.

Her death to time was her birth to eternity; the loss of this world an exchange for a better; one endowment

that she had being impaired, but many far greater added to the store. The house of Mordecai was too obscure a dwelling for so gracious a Hester, shrowding royal parts in the mantle of a mean estate, and shadowing immortal benefits under earthly veils. It was fitter, that being a sum of such rare perfections, and so worthy a spouse of our heavenly Ahasuerus, she should be carried to his court from her former abode, there to be invested in glory, and to enjoy both the place and pre-eminence answerable to her worthiness.

Her love would have been less able to have borne your death, than your constancy to brook hers, and therefore God mercifully closed her eyes before they were punished with so grievous a sight; taking out but a new lesson of patience from your old book, in which long study hath made you perfect. Though your hearts were equally balanced with a mutual and most entire affection, and the doubt insoluble which of you loved most; yet death finding her the weaker, though not the weakest of vessels, laid his weight in her balance, to bring her soonest to her rest. Let your mind therefore consent to that which your tongue daily craveth, that God's will may be done, as well here in the earth of her mortal body, as in that little heaven of her purest soul, since his will is the best measure of all events.

There is in this world a continual interchange of pleasing and afflicting accidents, still keeping their succession of times, and overtaking each other in their

several courses. No picture can be all drawn of the brightest colours, nor a harmony consorted only of trebles: shadows are needful in expressing of proportions, and the bass is a principal part in perfect music: the condition of our exile here alloweth no unmingled joy; our whole life is tempered between sweet and sour, and we must all look for a mixture of both. The wise so wist, prepared both for the better and the worse; accepting the one, if it come, with liking, and bearing the other without impatience, being so much masters of every turn of fortune, that none shall work them to excess. The dwarf groweth not on the highest hill, nor doth the tall man lose his height in the lowest valley. And as a base mind, though most at ease, will be dejected, so a resolute virtue is most impregnable in the deepest distress.

They evermore most perfectly enjoy their comforts, who least fear their contraries; for a desire to enjoy carrieth with it a fear to lose, and both desire and fear are enemies to quiet possession, making men less owners of God's benefits, than tenants at his will. The cause of our troubles is, that our misfortunes happen, either to unwitting or unwilling minds. Foresight preventeth the one, necessity the other: for he taketh away the smart of the present evils that attendeth their coming, and is not dismayed by any cross, that is armed against all.

Where necessity worketh without our consent, the

effect should never greatly afflict us ; grief being bootless, where it cannot help ; needless where there was no fault. God casteth the dice, and giveth us our chance ; the most that we can do is to take the point that the cast will afford us, not grudging so much that it is no better, as comforting ourselves that it is no worse. If men were to lay all their evils together, to be afterwards divided by equal portions amongst them, most men would rather take what they brought, than stand to the division ; yet such is the partial judgment of self-love, that every man judgeth his self-misery too great, fearing he shall find some circumstance to increase it and make it intolerable :—thus by thought he aggravates the evil.

When Moses threw his rod from him it became a serpent, ready to sting, and affrighted him so much as to make him fly ; but being quietly taken up, it was a rod again, serviceable for his use and no way hurtful. The cross of Christ, and the rod of every tribulation, seemeth to threaten stinging and terror to those that shun and eschue it, but they that mildly take it up and embrace it with patience may say with David, *thy rod and thy staff have been my comfort*. In this, affliction resembleth the crocodile ; fly, it pursueth and frighteth ; follow, it flieth and feareth ; a shame to the constant, a tyrant to the timorous. Soft minds that think only upon delights, admit no other consideration ; but in soothing things become so effeminate, that they are

apt to bleed with every sharp impression. But he that useth his thoughts with expectation of troubles, making them travel through all hazards, and opposing his resolution against the sharpest encounters, findeth in the proof facility of patience, and easeth the load of most heavy cumbers.

We must have temporal things in use, but eternal in wish; that in the one neither delight exceed, nor our desires be beyond our wants; and that in the other our most delight be here in desire, and our whole desire be hereafter to enjoy. They straighten too much their joys that draw them into the reach and compass of their senses, as if there were no felicity where no sense is witness: whereas, if we exclude our passed and future contentments, present pleasures have so fickle an assurance, that they are either forestaled before their arrival, interrupted before their end, or ended before they are well begun. The recollection of former comforts and the expectation of after hopes, is ever a relief unto a virtuous mind; whereas others, not suffering their life to continue in the conveniences of that which was and shall be divided, this day from yesterday and to-morrow, and by forgetting all, and forecasting nothing, abridge their whole life into the moment of present time.

Enjoy your sister in her former virtues; enjoy her also in her future meeting; both being titles of more certain delights than her casual life could ever have warranted. If we must think of her death, let it be as

a warning to provide us, since that which happeneth to one, may happen to another ; yea, none can escape that which is common to all. It may be that the blow that hit her, was meant to some of us ; and this missing was but a proof to take better aim in the next stroke. If we were diligent in thinking of our own, we should have little leasure to bewail the death of others. When the soldier in skirmish seeth his next fellow slain, he thinketh it better to look to himself, than to stand mourning a hapless mischance, knowing that the hand which sped so near a neighbour cannot be far from his own head. But we, in this behalf, are much like the silly birds, that seeing one stick in the lime-bush and striving to get away, with a kind of native pity are drawn to go to it, and to rush themselves into the same misfortune, even so, many, on their friends' decease, by musing on their lot, wittingly surfeit of so much sorrow, that sometimes they make mourning their last decease. But slip not you into this toil that hath taken none but weak affections ; hold not your eyes always upon your hardest haps, neither be you still occupied in counting your losses.

There are fairer parts in your body than scars, better eye-marks in your fortune than a sister's loss. You might haply find more comfort left than you would willingly lose, had you not already resigned the solaces of life, and shunned all comforts in the hopes of heaven ; yet since there is some difference between a

purpose and proof, intending and performing, a subdued enemy being ever ready to rebel when he findeth mighty help to make a party, it is good to strengthen reason against the violence of nature, that in this and like cases will renew her assaults. It was a forcible remedy that he used to withstand the conceit of a most lamentable occurrence, who having in one ship lost his children and substance, and hardly escaped himself from drowning, went presently into an hospital of lazars, where finding in a little room many examples of great misery, he made the smart of others' sores a lenitive to his own wound. For besides that lowness and poverty were common to them, they had also many cumbers private to themselves, some wanting their senses, some their wits, others their limbs, but all their health; in this consideration, therefore, he eased his mind, that Fortune had not given him the greatest fall.

If God had put you to Abraham's trial, commanding you to sacrifice the hope of your posterity, and to be to your only son an author of death, as you were to him of life;—if you had been tried in the straits of Jephtha's bitter devotions, embruing his sword in his daughter's blood, and ending the triumphs over his enemies with the voluntary funeral of his only offspring; still, since both their lives and their labours had been God's undeniable debt, your virtues ought to have obeyed, spite of all the encounters of carnal affection. And how much more in this case should you incline your love to God's

liking, in which he hath received a less part of his own, and that by the usual easiest course of nature's laws ?

Let God strip you to the skin, yea to the soul, so he stay with you himself: let his reproach be your honour, his poverty your riches, and he in lieu of all other friends. Think him enough for this world, that must be your possession for a whole eternity. Let others ease their carefulness with borrowed pleasures, not bred out of the true root, but begged of external helps. They shall still carry unquiet minds, easily altered with every accident, since they labour not for any change in their inward distempers, but by forgetting them for a time by outward pastimes. Innocency is the only mother of true mirth; and a soul that is owner of God, will quietly bear with all other wants, nothing being able to impoverish it but voluntary losses. Bear not, therefore, with her loss, for she is won for ever, but with the momentary absence of your most happy sister; yea, it cannot justly be called an absence, many thoughts being daily in parley with her. Men's eyes and ears, unworthy to enjoy so sweet an object, have resigned their interest, and embalmed this treasure in their hearts, being the fittest shrines for so pure a saint, whom, as none did know but did love, so none can now remember but with devotion.

Men may behold her with shame of their former life, seeing one of the weaker sex honor her weakness with such a train of perfections. Ladies may admire her, as

a glory to their degree, in whom honor was portrayed in her full likeness, grace having perfected nature's first draught with all the due colors of absolute virtue. All women accept her as a pattern to imitate, her gifts and her good parts having been so manifested; that even those that can reach the finest stitches, may themselves take new works out of this sampler. Who then could drink any sorrow out of so clear a fountain, or bewail the estate of so happy a creature; to whom, as to be herself, was her praise, so to be as she is was her highest bliss. You still float in a troublesome sea, and you find it by experience a sea of dangers: how then can it pity you to see your sister on shore, and so safely landed in so blissful a harbour? Since your Judith hath wrought the glorious exploit against her ghostly enemies, for the accomplishing whereof she came into the dangerous camp and warfare of this life, you may well give her leave to look home to her Bethulia, to solemnize her triumph with the spoils of her victory. Yea, you should rather have wished to have been porter to let her in, than mourn to see her safe returned. For through apparent hazards, she carried a heavenly treasure in an earthly vessel, which was too weak a treasure for such high riches; sin creeping in at the window of our senses, and often picking the locks of the strongest hearts. And for this it was laid up in a surer depositary to which the heavens are walls, and the angels keepers.

The base shell of a mortal body was unfit for so precious a Margarite, and the Jeweller that came into this world to seek good pearls, and gave not only all he had, but himself also to buy them, thought it now high time to bring her unto his bargain, finding her grown to a Margerite's full perfection. She stood upon too low a ground to take a view of her Saviour's most desired countenance, and forsaking the earth with Zaccheus, she climbed up into the tree of life, there to give her soul a full repast of his beauties. She departed with Jephtha's daughter from her father's house, but to pass some months in wandering about the mountains of this troublesome world, which being now expired, she was, after her pilgrimage, to return by covenant to be offered unto God in a grateful sacrifice, and to ascend out of this desert, like a cloud of perfume from burned spices. Let not therefore the crown of her virtue be the foil of your constancy, nor the end of her cumpers a renewing of yours. But since God was well pleased to call her, she not displeased to go, and you the third twist to make a triple cord, saying, Our Lord gave, and our Lord took away, as it hath pleased our Lord, so hath it fallen out : the name of our Lord be blessed.

*Clara Ducum soboles, superis nova sedibus hospes,
 Clausit inoffenso tramite pura diem:
 Dotibus ornavit, superavit moribus ortum,
 Omnibus una prior, par fuit una sibi:
 Lux genus ingenio, generi lux inclita virtus,
 Virtutisque fuit mens generosa decus.
 Mors mutat properata dies, orbemque relinquit
 Prolem matre, virum conjuge, flore genus.
 Occidit ! ast alium tulit hic occasus in ortum,
 Vivit, ad occiduas non reditura vices.*

OF Howard's stem a glorious branch is dead ;
 Sweet lights eclipsed were at her decease :
 In Buckhurts's line she gracious issue spread,
 And heaven with two, with four did earth increase.
 Fame, honour, grace, gave air unto her breath,
 Rest, glory, joys, were sequels of her death.

Death aimed too high, he hit too choice a wight,
 Renown'd for birth, for life, for lively parts:
 He killed her cares, he brought her worths to light,
 He robbed our eyes, but hath enriched our hearts.
 Lot let out of her ark a Noah's dove,
 But many hearts were arks unto her love.

Grace, nature, fortune, did in her conspire
To shew a proof of their united skill ;
Sly fortune, ever false, did soon retire,
But double grace supplied false fortune's ill.
And though she wrought not unto fortune's pitch,
In grace and virtue few were found so rich.

Heaven of this heavenly pearl is now possess'd,
Whose lustre was the blaze of honour's light ;
Whose substance pure, of every good the best ;
Whose price, the crown and meed of highest right :
Whose praise, to be herself; whose greatest bliss,
To live—to love—to be where now she is.

7

An Epistle of Comfort
TO THE REVEREND PRIESTS,

AND TO

**The Honourable, Worshipful, and Others of the
Lay Sort,**

Restrained in durance for the Catholic Faith.

An Epistle of Comfort.

IT hath always been a laudable custom in God's Church, for such as were afflicted in time of persecution, not only by continual prayer and good works, but also by letters and books, to comfort one another; and although the estate of imprisoned confessors, or, as the Fathers call them, designated Martyrs, is so honourable, and they themselves are presumed to be so especially enlightened and assisted by the Holy Ghost, that the fountain of spiritual delights is thought to be always open to them: yet because inward helps are nothing prejudiced, yea, rather abetted by external motives, I thought it no presumption to shew my reverend affection towards God's prisoners, by presenting to them this Epistle of Comfort. And though others have largely treated on the same subject, and in a very forcible manner; yet because where the same calamities are still continued, the remedies against them cannot be too often repeated, I deemed it not improper, in this heat and severity of molestations, to employ some labour in a thing of the like tenour. For, as to the wayfaring pilgrim, wandering in the dark and misty

night, every light, though never so little, is comfortable; and to a stranger, that travelleth in a land of divers languages, any one that can, though but brokenly, speak his country tongue, doth not a little rejoice him; so, peradventure, in this night of heresy, and amid the confusion of tongues which it hath here in our Island produced, this dim light which I shall set forth before you, and these my Catholic though broken speeches, which I shall use unto you, will not be altogether unpleasing. And, though I may say with Tertullian, that as the sickest are most willing to talk of health, not because they enjoy it, but because they desire it; so I entreat your patience, rather as one that would have it, than as one that possesseth it. Yet as sometimes a diseased physician may prescribe healthsome remedies, and a deformed engraver design a fair image; I hope no man will blame me, if, for my own good and your comfort, I have taken upon me to address you, and enlarge on a few points which seem some of the principal motives for consolation to those that suffer in God's cause.

And *first*, it must needs be a great comfort to those that, either reclaimed from schism or heresy, or from a dissolute life to the constant profession of the Catholic faith, are, for that cause, persecuted by Satan and his instruments: for it is a very great sign that they are delivered out of his power, and accounted by him as sheep of God's flock, seeing that otherwise he would

never so heavily pursue them. The poor cripple had lain long beside the pool of Probatica, and none would say a word of rebuke unto him ; but so soon as he was cured by Christ both in body and in soul, and began joyfully to execute his commandments, they straight reproved him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath day. When Mary Magdalen came to wash Christ's feet with her tears, and anoint them with precious ointment, there was a Simon to murmur at her for the one, and a Judas to reprove her for the other ; yet these spake not against her, whilst she held on her lewd and abandoned course.

It is not for us to regard the slanders of men, or to desert the service of God for them, seeing that it is but a very slender excuse, to alledge the fear or words of a vassal, as a just impediment for not performing our duty towards our Sovereign. The friendship of this world is an enemy to God, and St. Paul himself said, that if he would have pleased men, he could not have been the servant of God. He that walketh an upright way, and feareth God, is despised by him that treadeth the path of infamy ; but he that dwelleth in the Heavens shall laugh such to scorn, knowing how much better they deserve it, than those of whom they make their jest. It is no disgrace to the sun to be hated by the birds of night, nor to the jewel to be trodden on by swine.

You must not think, when you are come out of the

whale's belly, to sit with Jonah in the shadow, but that you shall have some envious worm to gnaw the root of your gourd asunder. When we come to the service of Christ, we come to a rough profession, that is found to have a continual defiance and enmity with the pleasures, vanities and praises of this world, and therefore we can look for nothing else at their hands, who are friends to the same, but only trouble, hatred, and persecution.

The more the waves and billows, how boisterous soever they be, beat against a rock, the more are they broken, and turned into a vain foam, and yet the rock is nothing the weaker. Let the malicious foam and fret against us, our rock is impregnable if we cleave unto it; hurt themselves they may, but harm us they cannot. So it appeareth of Stephen's persecutors, of whom it is written, that *they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him*, and yet he was nothing moved or terrified with their furious spite. His example may be a pattern to us of constancy, and teach us to make the same account of the obloquies of our adversaries, as he did of the malice of the Jews.

Wherefore whosoever hath entered a virtuous course, let him prepare his mind for all manner of temptation, both from the words and the wicked endeavours of the bad; for we know that the Devil will never agree with those who in God's cause are his enemies, howsoever he fawned upon them while they were in his power. As

long as the lion has the prey in his paw, he can dally and play with it, but if he see it offer to escape from him, he forth with fixes his claws into it. Pharaoh never so fiercely persecuted the Israelities as when they were going out of Egypt; Laban never pursued Jacob till he departed from him. God will alway defend a Moses, and praise him most when an Aaron and a Mary murmur against him; and Christ will take upon him the patronage of a Magdalen, what Judas soever controul her good works: yea, if men oppress them, the very senseless and unreasonable creatures will fight in their defence and witness their innocence. The sea will honour a true Israelite by giving him dry passage; the hungry lions will be lambs to a Daniel; the ravens will feed an Elijah; and the flames withhold their fury from a Shadrac, a Meshac, and an Abednego.

The second cause why we should willingly suffer persecution is, that *whom God loveth he chastiseth, and scourgeth every child that he receiveth*. And not without cause doth God chasten his children in this life; for if they cannot be won with easier remedies, whom he seeth ready to run astray, he holdeth them back with the hand-bit of adversity, and hedgeth them in with the thorns of tribulation. Like a most faithful paramour of our soul, when hanging naked, wounded, and dying on the cross, he often sent us embassies of love, saying, *tell my beloved that I languish for love*; and we most ungratefully refused his messengers. He

shewed us his feet nailed to attend our coming; his side open to give us entrance; his arms stretched forth ready to embrace us; his head inclined to afford us the kiss of peace; his eyes shut to all our offences; his ears open to hear our petitions; and finally, a multitude of bleeding wounds to show how entirely he loved us, and how dearly he bought us. But we, like the stiff-necked Jews, nothing moved with his excessive love, have contemned all his invitations; yea, when uttering his most ardent desire, he said, *I thirst*, we answered him with a draught of gall; and when, yielding up the ghost to conclude our redemption, he said, *it is consummated*; we with most brutish and savage hearts wounded him afresh with a thousand spears of sin. Yet hath not all this ingratitude altered his affection, for seeing that he cannot move us with so many griefs sustained in our behalf, he obscureth the sun of our comforts; he sendeth earthquakes of tribulations; he maketh the graves open, and setteth death before our eyes; to win in a manner by force, what he could not obtain by love; and to make us, even among his enemies, to confess him with the centurion, and say, *truly, this was the Son of God*.

The vanities of this world cast the soul into so delightful a phrenzy, and lull it so dangerously asleep, that many, in a frantic fit of licentiousness, run headlong to perdition, and while they rejoice they rave; and others, in a careless and remiss kind of life, sleep

themselves to death. For this reason it is that God holdeth over his children the rod of tribulation, both to temper the raging mood of the frantic, and to rouse the sleepers out of their lethargy. Not every one that spareth is our friend, nor every one that striketh, our enemy: for *better are the wounds of a friend, than the kisses of a foe.* Better it is to love with sincerity, than to deceive with lenity. He that bindeth the frantic, or awaketh the sick from their lethargy, though to both troublesome, yet to both is very friendly.

To wean us from an unnatural nurse, God anointeth her breast with the bitterness of tribulation; and as a mother desirous to attach her child to herself above all others, maketh all her household to use it badly in shew, that finding good treatment from none but her, it may more willingly repair unto her; so God suffereth us to be molested by the world, the flesh, and the devil, that we may acknowledge him alone and come unto him as our chief succour and refuge. The devil kisseth when he meaneth to kill; he giveth us a draught of poison in a golden cup, and in a sumptuous and stately ship wafteth his passengers upon the rock of eternal ruin. While he delighteth us with pleasure from without, he inwardly deceiveth us, and killeth our soul while he flattereth our fancy. He shroudeth his bitter poison under a deceitful sweetness; the pleasant flavour of the cup inviteth, but the sweet taste of the poison killeth: it is honey to the lip, but gall and poison to the stomach.

But God taketh a contrary course. For as the husbandman lops the vine, lest its vigour be unprofitably spent in leaves, and the fruit, being thereby weakened, be neither so much nor so pleasant ; so God, like a careful keeper of our soul, lest our whole mind should be employed in vain and superfluous pleasures, cutteth them from us, that our faculties, which would have been diffused unprofitably in them, being kept in compass by troubles, may be fitter to bring forth the fruits of eternal salvation. When God purposeth to heal, he spareth not to lame ; he ministereth bitter draughts to cleanse away corrupt humours, and sendeth embassies of death and vengeance when he meaneth to afford felicity and eternal life. Good Rachel prepared a grave for young Tobias, and yet heartily desired his long life. Joseph accused his brothers as spies, when he meant them least harm ; and detained little Benjamin as guilty of a theft, when he knew him full well to be a guiltless innocent. But these accusations were but an outward shew of suspicion, the more to utter his entire affection. Even so dealeth God with his children. *We have passed through fire and water*, said David ; but it followeth—and he hath led us into comfort. Many go out of prison and chains, but their journey's end is a kingdom. Many are in a few things vexed, but they shall be well considered for it in the end. Many are tried like gold in the furnace, but, at their time, shall regard be had unto them. If it be a grievous infirmity, at least it

maketh the soul sober ; and if God begin with *I have afflicted thee*, he will doubtless end with, *I will afflict thee no more*.

As we are fellows of our Saviour's passion, so shall we be of his comfort ; if with him we die, with him shall we live ; and if we share his cross, we shall be partners of his crown. God woundeth, but his wounds are the wounds of a friend. He sent Jonah to Ninevah to threaten their overthrow ; but his intent was to bring them to repentance, that he might continue his favour towards them. He sent to Hezekiah to announce to him his last day ; but his meaning was to make him sorry for his offence, that he might prolong his life. He suffered Daniel to be thrown into the den of lions ; but it was to advance him to greater credit. He that had seen Joseph undeservedly in prison, Judith in her enemy's camp, Mordecai in sack-cloth, with his gibbet before his eyes, and the innocent Susannah going to be stoned alive, would have lamented their case and feared their further misfortune : but had he known that Joseph's prison would end in a principedom, Judith's hazard in a most happy victory, Mordechai's peril in a royal preferment, and Susannah's outrage in glory and triumph, he would rather have thought them much indebted to God for the ensuing felicity, than greatly to be pitied for their present distress. The remembrance of former adversity may make the comforts that follow more delightful ; the benefit of calm

weather is most desired and best welcomed after a boisterous tempest ; health is never so much esteemed as after a great sickness, and all pleasure is most pleasant to those that have been the longest acquainted with pain. According to the proverb of Solomon—*A full stomach will loath the honeycomb, but one that is hungry will think the bitter sweet.*

But albeit God affordeth his final reward only to those that have passed through many tribulations ; yet when they are in trouble or anguish, he doth not abandon or leave them desolate, but alleviateth their misery with sundry comforts. *There shall flow a fountain out of the house of our Lord, saith Joel, and water the torrent of thorns.* And David, to the same effect—*According to the number of the sorrows of my heart, have thy solaces rejoiced my mind.* When Stephen was stoned, he saw the heavens opened, and Christ standing at the right hand of his father. When Elisha was beset with the Assyrians, he saw a hill of fiery chariots standing in his defence ; and when Elijah was like to die for hunger, he was fed and comforted by an angel. And it always falleth out true, that as the passions of Christ abound in us, so also by Christ aboundeth our consolation. And as the musician neither straineth the string of his instrument too high, for fear of breaking, nor letteth it too low, for fear of distuning ; so God, saith St. Chrysostom, will keep a mean, neither suffering us to be carelessly secure, nor driving us, for want of com-

fort, to despair. Hilarius fitly expresses it, when he says, ' This rod of the robd of Jesse flowered, that the sweetness of the flower might mitigate the severity of the rod.' If the potter temper the furnace agreeably to the vessel that he mindeth to frame; if the goldsmith use great care not to have his fire too great or too little for the quantity of his metal; how much more wary is God in not suffering us to be tempted above our strength. ' So much only,' saith St. Augustine, ' is the Devil permitted to tempt thee, as is for thy benefit, that thou mayest be well exercised, proved, and come to the knowledge of thyself, who knewest not thyself before.'

And in the *third* place, one that understandeth the coure of Christian behoof, cannot but think it a most comfortable thing to suffer adversity for a good cause; seeing that it is not only the livery and cognizance of Christ, but the very garment of royalty which he chose to wear in this life. Let us not therefore be afraid to say now to Christ, *O Lord, command me to come unto thee upon the waters*; for be the surges never so boisterous, the ocean never so deep, the stormy winds never so outrageous, if we run upon them towards Christ they will either yield a dry passage by dividing themselves as the Red Sea did to the Israelites, or they will uphold us from perishing as they once did St. Peter. For faithful is God, who will never suffer you to be tempted more than you can bear. And surely, now is the time that

we are called by Christ through fire and water, and now with loud voice doth he renew his old proclamation; *Whoever loveth father, mother, wife, children, house, or living more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, cannot be my disciple.* We must not now seek Christ, as our lady did, amongst her kinsfolk and acquaintance; nor as the spouse did, that said, *In my bed have I, in the night; sought him whom my heart best loved;* nor as the Israelites did, of whom Hosea speaketh, *In their flocks and herds shall they seek our Lord.* Moses saw him in the desert, amidst fire and thorns, and in the mount amid lightning, thunder, and darkness. Daniel saw him on a fiery throne, amid burning wheels, with a swift flood of fire running before him; and shall we think to be more privileged than our ancient fathers? Think we to find in down and daintiness him who to them appeared so terrible and fearful? Do we think that his rigour and justice, signified by these terrible semblances, are so relented, that he should shew himself unto us only under an amiable and lovely aspect? Surely, we are greatly deceived if we feed ourselves with this vain persuasion. Effeminate is the breast, where there is no peril: the combat in adversity is the trial of truth. If therefore our God be more delighted with our valour in conflict, than with our pleasure in peace, let us say with St. Peter, *With thee am I ready to go into prison, and to death itself:* and with St. Thomas, *Let us also go and die together with him.*

We see that an enamoured knight hath no greater felicity than to do that which is acceptable to his paramour ; and the fading beauty of a fair lady's countenance is able to work so forcibly in men's minds, that neither loss of riches, danger of imprisonment, dread of torture, no, nor present death itself, is able to withhold them. Every peril undertaken for her, seemeth pleasant ; every reproach honorable ; all drudgery delightsome ; yea, the very wounds that are suffered for her, are void of smart ; and more rejoiced is the wounded wretch with hope that his hurt will purchase favour, than aggrieved that his body hath received such a maim. The colours that she likes seem fairest ; the meat that fitteth her taste sweetest ; the fashion most agreeable to her fancy comeliest : her faults are virtues, her sayings oracles, her deeds patterns. In a word, whatever pleaseth her, be it ever so unpleasant, seemeth good ; and whatever cometh from her hand, be it ever so dearly bought, and of ever so little value, is deemed a precious and a cheaply-purchased treasure. O unspeakable blindness of man's heart, that so easily yieldeth to the lure of the senses ; that is so soon caught with the beauty of an image, and yet hath not the grace to remember whom it resembleth !

The example of Christ and the title of Christian, are motives sufficiently forcible to make us suffer adversity : but were they not so, yet considering where we are, what state we stand in, and what dangers hang over us,

together with our ordinary wants and necessities, we shall find that our whole life is so necessarily joined with sorrows, that it should rather seem a madness to live in pleasure, than odious to live in pain.

We ought to exclaim, *Woe unto me that my sojourning is prolonged!* For beside the rivers of Babylon, what cause have we but to lay aside our mirth and music, and to sit and weep, remembering our absence from our heavenly Sion, amid the vassalage and servility of Egypt? When we are daily oppressed with incessant affliction, who would not say with the wise man; *I accounted laughter error, and to joy I said, why art thou in vain deceived?* For our laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and our mirth shall be prevented with mourning. Happy is he that sitteth solitary, and, in the view of these miseries, lifteth up himself above himself; happy is he that carrieth the yoke from his very youth; blessed are they that mourn and understand how much better it is to go to the house of lamentation, than to the hall of banqueting.

What comfort can a man reap in a place that is governed by the Prince of darkness, and peopled with our enemies, and the enemies of God; where vice is advanced, virtue scorned, the bad rewarded, and the good oppressed? What quiet or contentment can be enjoyed, where the pains are infinite, universal, and unutterable; the pleasures few, rare, and damnable: where friendship breedeth danger to the soul; enmity, vexation to the

body; where want is miserable, plenty full of peril, and a man on every side assaulted with implacable adversaries.

We read, that when the harlot who came for judgment to Solomon, heard him call for a sword, and command that her little child should be parted in two, she presently fell into so vehement a passion of sorrow, that her bowels were removed for pity of her son. We read, that Agar, being driven out of Abraham's house, and forced to wander in the wilderness with her tender suckling, seeing the infant ready to die for want of water, and not finding wherewithal to refresh it had not the heart to see her little innocent give up the ghost, but withdrew herself afar off from it, and with pitiful lamentation lifted up her voice to heaven, feeding her pensive and timorous thoughts with the doleful remembrance and continual fear of her child's departure. We see what cold and trembling agonies surprise the poor wretch that standeth at the bar, while the jury deliberates upon his final sentence. We see how doubtfully the sick patient hangeth suspended between hope and fear, while the physicians are in council whether his disease be mortal. Finally, if a young bride, tenderly affected, and deeply enamoured of her new spouse, see him assaulted by fierce and cruel enemies, and obliged to wage a hot and dangerous battle, what a multitude of overwhelming passions oppress her! How is she distressed with varying and fearful surmises! Of every

gun that is discharged, she feareth lest the contents have entered his breast ere the sound came to her ears. At every word that is reported of any that are slain, fear maketh her doubt lest her best-beloved is one. Every rumour costeth her a tear, every suspicion a pang; and till she see the battle ended, and her spouse safely returned, she hangeth between life and death, drawing every thing to sorrowful constructions, and utterly refusing all kind of comfort. O, how hard and flinty-hearted are we toward our own souls, that seeing them in all the dangers that surround them, feel not in ourselves any motion of the like affection!

The sword of God's justice hangeth over our souls, ready, for our sins, to divide us from eternal bliss; and uncertain it is whether he will give, not only a part, but the whole, to the foul fiend that hath so often, through our iniquities, stolen us from our mother's side, detaining us in his envious hands; and shall not we be moved with pity and grief? We are, with Agar, exiled from Paradise into this barren desert, and cannot certainly assure ourselves that we shall have so much as one drop of grace to mitigate the thirsting passions, which, without it, will undoubtedly work the death of our souls; and can we, seeing, not our child, but the chief portion of ourselves, in such a taking, with dry eyes and unnatural hearts behold it without sorrow? Are we not to stand at the bar, in the day of judgment, where the devil, our consciences, and all

creatures, shall give most straight information against us? The twelve apostles as our jury, and Christ as our judge, whom we have daily offended, shall pass their verdict upon us in the most rigorous manner; either to eternal death, or everlasting salvation; and can we, until we hear the sentence of our heavenly judge, refrain from fear and apprehension of a hard resolution? Is not our most beautiful and noble portion, from which the body derives all its seemliness—without which it straight becometh ghastly and hideous—is it not in the throng and press of most powerful, subtle, and barbarous enemies; having continual war, not only against flesh and blood, but also against princes and powers, and against the rulers of the world of this darkness? Is it not also set in the reach of many occasions, allurements, and provocations unto sin? and can we, seeing this, do any thing but mourn, and live in continual anguish and pensiveness, until we see the battle ended, and our souls safely delivered out of danger?—O, benumbed and senseless hearts of ours, that at the consideration of such heavy and lamentable evils cannot find scope and field for sorrow! Let us at least be sorry for our want of sorrow, and bewail our scarcity of tears, lest we fall into a careless security, and by not sorrowing as we should, neglect to consider how great the causes are for which we ought.

Seeing, then, that on every side we have such urgent occasion to mourn, and pass the days of this our

painful pilgrimage in grief and heaviness, we must rather content ourselves in tribulation than in repose ; seeing that, by the first, we are but invited to weeping and sorrow, which is the thing that we should profess ; and by the last, to comfort and solace, which, with reason, the eminent dangers and straights which we stand in will not allow us to enjoy.

This was so well understood both by Christ and his saints, that though it had been as easy for the Saviour to have been born an emperor, and to have enjoyed all the pleasures that heaven and earth could yield ; yet would he not, in this vale of tears, give so preposterous an example of mirth : but as one that knew to what place he had come, he entered into the world weeping, and during his abode with us lived like a mourner, and in his death took his leave with tears and with torments. What his saints have done, let all antiquity testify : how, like men that had no feeling of wordly comfort, they roved in desarts, lodged in desolate caves, were clothed with hair and sackcloth, fed very little and grossly, chastised their bodies often and severely ; endeavouring to keep themselves always in remembrance that they were mourners, and therefore choosing place, habit, diet, and exercise, fittest for that doleful profession. The saints knew that Heaven alone was the land of the living, and that in this world we sit in darkness and the shadow of death ; and therefore they wisely judged it unfitting to have mirth and music in time of sorrow.

All things, therefore, tending here to decay, and being tainted with death, the Saints, in mourning sort, agreeably to dying and passing persons, lived in a continual farewell, as men that always stood ready for their departure; little regarding the things they had to leave, and having their hearts settled upon the felicity to which they tended. And as men, that desire to see the stars at noon day, go down into a deep and dark well, from thence the more easily to descry them; so they, desiring to have the eyes of their hearts perpetually fixed upon the stars of heaven, that is, the glory of the saints, descended into that profound, obscure, and abased kind of life, sequestering themselves from the light and pleasure of these inferior comforts; yea, and delighting in griefs, the better to conceive of future happiness.

Oh, how much are worldlings deceived that walk in great things, and think above themselves; that rejoice in the time of weeping, and make their place of imprisonment a palace of pleasure; that consider the examples of the Saints as follies, and their end as dishonourable; that think to go to Heaven by the wide way that only leadeth to perdition! Well may we say to these, with St. Augustine, 'Whither go ye? you perish and you perceive it not; that is not the way to the place you seek, and at which you desire to arrive: your meaning is to be happy, but miserable are those journeys which you run, and to more misery do they lead.'

Seek not so great a good by evil ; if you mean to receive it, hither must you come, and this way must you go.' The path to heaven is narrow, rough, and full of wearisome and trying ascents, nor can it be trodden without great toil ; and therefore, wrong is their way, gross their error, and assured their ruin, that after the testimony of so many thousands of saints, will not learn where to settle their footing. It were enough to have the example of Christ alone, ' who,' as St. Augustine saith, ' crieth always unto us, Which way wilt thou go ? I am the way. Whither wilt thou go ? I am the truth. Where wilt thou stay ? I am the life.' And if this way lead us through austere and painful passages ; if this truth teacheth humility ; if this life be not achieved without a doleful and dying pilgrimage ; *Who be unto you that laugh, for you shall weep ; and happy are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* For in truth, the contentments of this life are but real misery and feigned felicity ; assured sorrow, and doubtful delights ; rough storms, and timorous rest ; solace full of sadness, and hope full of hazard. They are like fair weather in winter, nothing durable ; like a calm in the sea, always uncertain ; like the steadiness of the moon, that is ever changing.

Seeing therefore that all our troubles, penalties, restraints, and afflictions, are but means to remind us of our state, and the dangers of our profession, and but seeds of eternal glory, how much soever they may seem

covered and corrupted here on earth, let us solace ourselves in hope of our joyful harvest. We are but pilgrims here; we have no place of abode, but seek a future place of rest. If the way had been filled with pleasures, with true delights, with unfading and odoriferous flowers, we should easily have been drawn aside in our journey towards Heaven, attracted and withheld by the pleasant view and desire of these allurements. God hath therefore made our journey tedious, uncomfortable and distressing, that we may hasten to our repose, and swiftly run over the course of this life. Like the dove without the ark, we are allowed to find no rest, that on the wing of penitence and longing desire we may flicker still at the window, until it please our Noah to put out his merciful hand, and receive us into the ark of his heavenly felicity.

But suppose that the pleasures of this world were such as rather to invite us to comfort and joy, than to sorrow and patient sufferance; yet if we consider what our life hath been, what our sins are, and what punishments we have thereby deserved, we shall think that God deals most mildly with us, and rejoice in our troubles, when we reflect that they are allotted us in lieu of most intolerable chastisements. Had man persevered in the state of innocence, neither would the body have been subject to any diseases, nor the mind to any sorrow or disordered passions. The earth would have been to him a place of pleasure, the air temperate, all

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creatures obedient to him ; all things, in fine, to his contentment, and nothing to his annoyance. If therefore we consider now the miseries of our bodies, as hunger, thirst, nakedness, deformity, sickness, and mortality ; the troubles of our mind, as phantasies, fears, perplexities, anguishes, and odious imperfections ; likewise the general scourges of disease, war, a thousand hazards and calamities united, and the other evils that are incident to this life ; they are so many in number, so grievous in quality, and so ordinary in experience to all, that whoever well weigheth them, might think them sufficient scourges not only for one, but for all the sins of mankind. Consider the infirmities of the mind ; its furious rages, envies, rancours, and corrosives ; its implacable sorrows and desperate passions ; the continual ill, torment, and remorse of conscience, and infinite other fits and agonies—Consider the displeasure of superiors ; the malice and enmity of equals ; the contempt, ignominy, and reproach of inferiors ; the fraud and treachery of all sorts and degrees—Consider the other ordinary molestations, by loss of goods, limbs, liberty, friends, wife or children ; by dangers of fire, water, sword, beast, and infinite of like quality :—and remember that all these things, and the bare account of the commodities and pleasures contrary to the same, befel man by reason of one, and that, in shew, but a light sin. Let us then not think much if we, whose offences are most grievous, and very many, suffer

a few of these scourges, remembering that, compared with what we have deserved, they have scarce any colour or shadow of misery. All the fearful examples of God against sinners ought to put us in mind of his singular mercy towards us. He is not deficient in the same instruments of punishment, and we even exceed in the like abomination of sins, no less worthy of being chastised; he is, notwithstanding, contented to abate the wrath we deserve, and with a fatherly pity wishes rather to give us a warning not to offend hereafter, than a scourge for our former trespasses.

But, in the *fourth* place—to come to the principal drift of my discourse—what more forcible things can I set before your eyes, as motives to comfort you in your tribulation, than the cause of your persecution, the honour of your present estate, and the future reward of your patient and constant sufferance?

And first, as to the cause that you defend—which is no less than the only true and Catholic religion. You defend that Church, which is avouched by all antiquity; confirmed by the blood of infinite martyrs; gainsayed by the heretics of all ages, and most undoubtedly approved by all concurring testimonies. You defend that Church of Rome, to which, as St. Cyprian saith, ‘misbelief can have no access, and which can receive no forgery;’ and of which also St. Gregory Nazianzen observeth, ‘that old Rome has held the true faith, even from the times of our forefathers, and always retaineth it,

as is fitting for a city that ruleth the whole world.' You defend not a church separated from others, neither the dismembered Church of Arius, of Luther, nor of Calvin, which, as they derive their several names from their several founders, so are they known only thereby. You defend the Catholic Church, whose name, as St. Augustin witnesseth, no heretic dareth for shame lay claim to as proper to his own sect, having by all ages and persons been accounted the known style of men of our profession. You defend a Church founded by Christ, enlarged by his Apostles, impugned by none but infidels and enemies to the truth; whose doctrine can be derived from no late author, convicted of no novelty, affected with no variableness, change, or contrariety, in essential points of belief. You defend that Church, which, notwithstanding the rage of the Jews in her infancy, the barbarous tyranny of Pagan emperors in her childhood, the outrageous persecution of heretics in her ripe age, hath ever remained impregnable; which, the more it hath been pruned and lopped, the more it hath shot out and flourished; the more it hath been crushed, with the more vigour hath it sprung; and like the ark of Noah, by the swelling of the waters that drowned all other sects, it hath been elevated and advanced to the view of all nations.

But, on the other side, two hundred founders of new sects, that have been since Christ's time, though they have for a season flourished and prevailed, having em-

perors and potentates to defend them, infinite books and writings to divulge their doctrines, and all temporal aids to set them forward; yet we see that their memory is quite abolished, their names commonly unknown, and no more mention of them than the condemnation and disproof of their errors, recorded by Catholic writers. The same, doubtless, will be the end of the novelties of our days, which being only parts of their corruptions, revived and raked out of oblivion, as heretofore they vanished with their devisers, so will they now with their revivors. Nay, we see this even now nearly verified, seeing that among so many of Luther and Calvin's progeny, there is found scarce any one (peradventure none at all) that dares avouch and take upon him the patronage of all their articles; yea, their disciples are already strangely divided into contrary and numberless sects: a most manifest proof that God is not the author of their opinions, for he is the God of peace and not of dissention.

Such doubtless is the providence of Almighty God, that the inconstancy, variety, and sudden change—the dissention of doctrines and division of scholars, both from their masters and among themselves, should be a manifest argument that their assertions proceeded from the spirit of error, were maintained with the spirit of pride and obstinacy, and should be quickly ended by the spirit of discord and contradiction.

So ripe indeed is heresy grown, and so infinite the

sects and divisions into which it hath spread, besides new ones daily uprising, that the variety of religions, and the uncertainty which among so many is truest, hath made the greatest part of our country to believe none at all. And this, in truth, is the end and last step to which heresy bringeth a man. Seeing therefore that the ship of St. Peter now saileth, not against the wind of one evil spirit, or against the stream of one flood of heresy, but against a tide of all the pestilent spirits of former ages, and against the main stream of all heresy; it is no less necessary than glorious for us to employ our last endeavours in the defence thereof; and think our limbs happily lost, our blood blessedly bestowed, our lives most honourably spent, in this so noble and important a cause.

Again, what an assured defence of our cause have we, in that continual, uninterrupted descent and succession of Bishops in the See of Rome; of whom, from St. Peter's time to the present day, we are able to give a certain account, and to shew the same belief that they, from hand to hand, have delivered unto us without change or alteration. Moreover, if we consider both the sincerity and sanctity of our faith, and the absurdity and corruption of our adversaries' belief and behaviour, by the fruits we shall soon know in whose garden the best tree groweth. For, as concerning our faith, the principles, rules, and grounds thereof are such, that though some of them be above, yet are they

not contrary to reason ; neither yield they scope of licentiousness or riot to such as live according to their pre-script, but keep them in order and compass of their duty towards God and man : whereas among the very articles of Luther and Calvin's religion, there are some of such tenour, that in reason and piety they cannot be held for religious truths ; nor, being believed, restrain men's consciences within the limits of virtue, but rather open them a wide gate to desperate and dissolute living. For when people are told that all the actions of man, even the very best, are damnable sins, and that all sins are of equal enormity, what heart or encouragement can they have to follow virtue, or what bridle can hold them from plunging into every vice ?

Again, when they hear that the commandments of God are impossible to be kept ; and that howsoever a man break them, it neither can, nor ought, to make him doubt of his election, which dependeth only upon God's predestination ; why should they not think it folly to endeavour to observe God's law, being an impossibility ; yea, and upon certainty of their salvation, become careless of breaking any commandment, taking what course most pleaseth their sensual appetite ? Further, he that maketh God the author of sin, and as well the inforcer of man to wicked and impious acts, as the director to any virtue, must needs think his case most desperate in being thus prevented from avoiding offence, and God a most rigorous and unjust judge, that condemneth a

man for that fault which he could not avoid. What could be the effect of such principles, but an unchristian and irreligious behaviour ?

But now, on the other side, I only appeal to the common experience of the lives of Catholics, both in our own and former ages. Let all histories witness their sincere dealings, plain words, frugal tables, unfeigned promises, assured love and amity, and most friendly and blameless conversation one with another. Let us consider their large hospitality in housekeeping ; their liberality towards the poor ; their readiness to all merciful and charitable acts. Let us all remember their assiduity, and continual exercise of prayer ; their straight observation of long fasts ; their austerity and rigour in the chastisement of their bodies ; and we shall find what different manners and fruits proceed from our belief, and from the doctrine of these new reformers. Yea, and the chief things they lay to our charge are, that we keep men too much in awe ; that we restrain them too much from carnal liberty ; that we have too much of the cross of Christ, that scandal to the Jews, and folly to the Gentiles.

Yes, God be thanked ! even our adversaries themselves are so fully persuaded of our good behaviour, that if a man in company be modest, and grave in countenance and demeanour ; if he use no swearing, foul or unseemly speech ; if he refuse to join in lewd company and dishonest actions—he is straight suspect-

ed for a papist. And if, on the other side, there be any one ruffianly, quarrelsome, foul-spoken, and lewdly conditioned, he is never mistrusted for a papist, but taken for a sound and undoubted protestant. Let also the records of assizes and sessions be searched, and let it be but shewn, among so many hundreds of protestants as are yearly executed for felonies, murders, rapes, extortions, forgeries, and such like crimes, how many Catholics have ever been, in so many years, attached justly with such-like offences. Let but the neighbours of catholic and protestant gentlemen bear witness who live best, and are readiest to all good deeds and works of charity. Let the gaolers and keepers of prisons report what difference they find in the lives of catholic and protestant prisoners: and if all these say, as the truth is, that we go beyond the others in Christian duty, then do they by their own testimony avouch the tree of our religion to be good, seeing that, as Christ saith; *An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.*

Secondly, as concerning your state—how can that be otherwise than honourable, when your cause is so good; seeing the cause honoureth the combat, and assureth you of the final victory? Your adversaries are mighty, their force very great, their vantage not unknown, their malice experienced: but your captain hath always conquered, your cause hath been always in the end advanced, your predecessors never lost the field; where-

fore, then, should you have less hope of the victory? Christianity is a warfare, and Christians spiritual soldiers. In its beginning, our faith was planted in the poverty, infamy, persecution, and death of Christ; in its progress, it was watered by the blood of God's saints; and it cannot come to the full growth unless it be fostered with the showers of the martyrs' blood. You it is, whom God hath allotted to be the chief actors in this contest. From your veins he means to derive the streams that shall water his Church. He hath made choice of you to delight his friends, and confound his enemies, with the beauty and grace of your virtuous life and patient constancy. Now is the time come for the light of the world to blaze out; for the salt of the earth to season weak souls tending to corruption; yea, and for the good shepherd to spend his life for the defence of his silly flock. The pruning-time is come, and in order that the tree of the church may sprout out more abundantly, the branches and boughs of full growth are lopped off. Now is the time come of which Christ forewarned us: *It shall come to pass, that he who killeth you shall think he doth God a service.* Lo, the things that were said, are now done; and now, since that is fulfilled which was foretold, that which was promised will also be performed; our Lord himself assuring us: *When you see all these things come to pass, then know you that the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* When we see the flower, we hope for the fruit,

and take it as presage of a calm and temperate season. Our flowers, that foreshew the happy calm of our felicity, grow out of thorns, and of briars must we reap our fruit. But if the stalk wound, the flowers heal; if the gathering be troublesome, the fruit is the more delightful. We know that the flower of Jesse gave its most pleasant scent, and came to its full growth upon the cross; we know that the fruit of life was not gathered without thorns.

When a wise shipmaster setteth forth from the shore and goeth to sea, he lays aside the remembrance of wife, children, house, and family, and employs his body and mind only to the due performance of his office, avoiding the dangers of the deep, and directing his ship to a gainful haven. You are now launched out of the port of worldly prosperity, and therefore it behoveth you to disencumber yourselves of all earthly cares. Now is the time whereof the spouse, in person of the church, said, *Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden that the spice thereof may flow out.* These winds now blow, and it is now time that the spice fall, and the virtues and constant examples of Saints, that lay hidden and covered amongst the leaves, be with this persecution shaken from them, and laid open for every one to gather. We must now ascend to the mount of myrrh, which is in taste bitter, and to the hill of frankincense, which giveth no sweet savour but when it is by fire resolved. The fire of persecu-

tion is enkindled to prove whether we be pure gold, and fit to be laid up in the treasury of God. Now cometh the winnower with his fan to see who is blown away like light chaff, and who resisteth the blasts like massy wheat. That which lieth hid in the young blade of corn, is displayed in the ripe ear; and that which is concealed in the flower, is uttered in the fruit. Many believers are deemed equal, whom trial proveth of unequal faith. Many flowers promise a multitude of fruit, but when they are put to the proof by storms of wind, very few persevere to the full growth: even so, many seem faithful in the calm of the church, but when the blasts of adversity bluster against them, few are found in the fruit of martyrdom. The cunning of the pilot is not known till the tempest riseth; nor the courage of the captain, till the war beginneth; nor the constancy of the Catholic till the persecutor rageth.

We must not suffer Christ's flock either to be scandalized by our example, or destitute of our necessary endeavours. Suppose a serious and earnest battle, whereupon the state of the common-weal depended, and where the King himself was in complete armour, ready in person to fight for his kingdom: should any of his nobles come into the field with a fan of feathers instead of a buckler, and a posey of flowers instead of a sword, and, in every respect, more like a carpet-knight than a man of arms, surely the king could not take it but in very evil part: even so will Christ, if in this spiritual

war against his Church, for which he fought in person, and received so many wounds, we should look more like worldly wantons than true soldiers, and not be as ready as our king and captain to venture our lives in the same contest. Now, therefore, is the time that it becometh us to show proof of ourselves. Now must it be known whether we be vessels of honour or reproach; whether we be signed with the seal of the lamb, or branded with the mark of the beast; whether we be of the wheat or of the tares; and, finally, whether we belong to the flock of Christ or to the herd of Belial.

And a thousand times happy are you, whose persons are proofs, whose chains are pledges of your future immortality! A thousand times happy, I say, whose estate is both glorious here, and a sure way to an unspeakable glory hereafter! For though prisons be in themselves the folds of Satan, to harbour his lewd flock, yet when the cause ennobleth the name of prisoner, the prisoner abolishes the dishonour of the place. What thing of old more odious than the cross? What place more abhorred than the Mount of Calvary? What rooms more reproachful than the grates and dungeons of the Saints?—Yet now, what thing more honourable than the Holy Cross? What place more revered than the aforesaid Mount? What sanctuaries more desired than the dungeons of the Saints? A reproachful thing it is to be chained in sin; a miserable thing it is to be enthralled in the vassalage of the devil, in the

servile subjection to our lawless appetites, and in the slavish bondage of worldly vanities : but honourable it is, in God's cause, to be abridged of bodily liberty for maintaining the true liberty and freedom of the soul. And where can you so freely range among the choirs of angels, as when you are sequestered from the distractions of vain company? Where can you take a fuller repast of the sweet fruits of prayer and contemplation, than when the flesh-pots of Egypt are farthest out of sight? Your eyes are not too much troubled with impious and wicked sights; your ears are not annoyed with outcries and heinous blasphemies; you are quiet from many scandals, and secured from occasion of divers temptations. Finally, think not of the name of prison, and you will find it a retiring-place, fittest to serve God. If the prison be cumbered with darkness, yourselves are lamps to light it; if it charge you with fetters, yet are you loosed and unbound towards God; if it affright you with expectation of judges, yourselves hereafter shall judge nations and rule over people. Let them complain of the prison, that know not the glory and sovereign prerogative of that place: but for a Catholic, that hath Christ for his author, the Apostles for his witnesses, all former Saints for testimonies, how honourable it is to suffer in God's cause, and how great a shame not to think worthily and reverently thereof! Such is the honour that the chains give him that is a captive in God's cause, that

his room, wheresoever it be, is honourable; and he, by his fetters, more richly adorned than he could be with any princely or imperial robes. Mordecai was not so much honoured with the royal garments of Ahasuerus, nor Solomon so glorious in his costliest habit, nor Herod so adorned when in gorgeous attire, as St. John the Baptist when he had achieved the title of *John in chains*. It was a great prerogative to be an Apostle, a Doctor, an Evangelist; it was a singular favour to be rapt into paradise, and to the third heaven, and to hear secrets which it was not lawful for man to speak; it was a rare privilege to heal diseases, not only by the touch of his hands, but by the touch of his very handkerchiefs and girdles. But St. Paul acknowledges a greater title to honour, when, writing to Philemon, he omitteth his usual title of Paul an Apostle or servant of Jesus Christ, and beginneth his Epistle with *Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ*. Herein he seems to follow the custom of great personages, who, when from inferior dignities they are enhanced to more honourable titles, always in their letters omitting the other, set down their principal style, proper to their newly achieved preferment. What place more acceptable than heaven? What seat more to be wished, than a throne on God's right hand? What company more to be desired than the fellowship of angels? What dignity so great as to be one of the celestial Spirits?—And yet St. Chrysostom thought St. Paul's prison a worthier place, his dungeon

a nobler seat, his fellow captives more honourable company, and the state of Christ's prisoner a more surpassing dignity. If you ask the cause, he will answer, because it is more glorious to a stout soldier, and more pleasant for a true lover, to suffer for his captain, and labour in the service of his love, than to be honoured by them. 'I account it more honorable,' saith he, 'for Christ to be troubled, than of Christ to be honourèd.' For, if Christ becoming man, and stripping himself in a manner of his majesty, thought it not so honourable to remain in his glory, as, for our sakes, to come down and suffer upon the cross; how much more ought we to deem it a singular preferment to suffer for his sake? The Apostles rejoiced that they were privileged with this honour. They went rejoicing from the presence of the Council, because they were thought worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. But we never read, that they so rejoiced at their power over devils, the gift of miracles, or other like especial favours, which well declareth how much they prized their persecution more than their authority. And therefore Christ said, *You are blessed*—not for commanding devils, for raising the dead, for healing the lame, or working of infinite wonders,—but, *you are blessed when men hate you, and persecute you, and speak all the evil they can against you for my sake.*

What prisoner in God's cause would not cry out with David, *Thy bonds fall out to my great glory?* How did

Felix tremble at the speech of St. Paul in chains! How many did that great apostle bring to Christ, while he was bound for him, glorying in them as so much the fairer, because they were bred in his captivity! Where did Joseph begin to be made a decipherer of dreams, and a searcher of secret interpretations, but in prison? Where did Jeremiah prophecy more boldly and truly the overthrow of his enemies, but in prison? Where did Sampson recover his strength, and victoriously revenge himself upon the Philistines, but when he was brought forth from prison to play before them? Manasseh, a most wicked idolator and impious king, was not converted till he was made a captive. So that we see the prison is a school of divine and hidden mysteries to God's friends, a fountain of revenge against his enemies, and a cell of repentance to careless offenders. It is those who are in prison that are visited by Angels, as St. Peter; fed by prophets, as Daniel; honoured by heavenly light and earthquakes, as St. Paul and Silas. Wherefore be not you dismayed, but rather take comfort in your present estate. If you be despised by the bad, you are honoured by the good; if you be disgraced of men, you may right well look for your praise from God. St. John the Baptist was allowed worthy of heaven, both in respect to his rough habit, his hard diet, his innocent life, his high function, and great prerogatives; yet so long as he was at liberty, and the people ran admiring his life and reverencing his person, we

hear no great mention made by Christ of him ;—but when he was once become *John in chains*, fallen into worldly disgrace, and preferred to this christian honour, the captain straight sounded the soldier's renown, and God himself rehearsed the catalogue of his divine praises. Now, let the captives of the world flatter themselves with the vain titles of liberty. Let them boast of their freedom when every thread and ornament about them is a fetter to hold them in captivity ; when their tongues are enthralled to the ears of potentates, their actions and all their behaviour framed to the liking of great personages' eyes ; their senses, bodies and minds the shame of their own sensualities. It is with them, as St. Chrysostom observes, as with kings that are taken captives by a barbarous prince, who, for their greater ignominy and his own glory, suffereth them to keep on their princely robes, and to wear their crowns, and in this attire forceth them to most base and servile offices. These things considered, let us regard our prison as a place of preparation, and a private school of exercise, to train and instruct us for the public service. It is not for the advantage of a valiant soldier to come from disports to bloody deeds, from the carpet to the camp ; it is necessary to be hardened first in rough entreaty of himself, in hard usage, and toilsome travels. Thus it is, that in peace they shall learn to digest the disasters and incommodities of war, and by these forerunning labours inure their bodies to

want of ease, and foster the courage and prowess of their minds. Happy therefore are you! what troubles soever you sustain for the exercise of your virtue, and the better enabling both of body and mind. Such was the preparation of the champions and soldiers of proof in former ages; they were restrained of liberty, and straitened in their diet from pleasant meats and sweet drinks. The more they were laboured, the better they were liked; and the more turmoiled in trouble, the more hope they had of the victory; knowing that virtue and constancy gather force with hardness and vigour, but languish and fall to ruin in softness and ease. This did they regard of a corruptible crown, which they were neither certain to attain, nor sure to possess. We, therefore, aiming at an incorruptible reward, let us reckon the prison a place of trial, that we may be brought into judgment well fortified against all encounters.

And now, in the last place, for your comfort, I put you in mind of a most consoling thing, that, if you be put to death in this cause of the Catholic faith, your death is martyrdom, and your foil, victory. And therefore, seeing that die we must, let us embrace this happy occasion to pass over our mortal end with the reward of immortality; neither let us fear to be killed, who thereby are sure to be crowned. Death of itself to the good is not so odious, but that, for infinite reasons, they have rather cause to wish it than to avoid it, and mo-

lives to desire it rather than to fear it. Sweet is the end to the labourer's toil ; willingly doth the traveller question about his inn ; often casteth the hireling when his year will be complete ; the husbandman always looketh for the time of his harvest ; the merchant is still busy about his bills, to know the day of payment ; and the woman great with child is ever musing on the time of her delivery. No less comfort is it to God's servants to think of their decease, seeing that *There is their heart, where also their treasure is.* Where the conscience is clear, death is looked for without fear ; yea, desired with delight, and accepted with devotion. It killeth our most dangerous and domestic enemy. It unloadeth us of a cumbersome burden which oppressed our soul. Who would not willingly be out of the way of fortune, out of the infinite hazards and perils that daily beset us ? Who would not be glad to settle his soul in security, safe from the storms of life ? We are promised that here we shall be persecuted and hated of the world, that we shall weep and live in sorrow, that we shall be despised and put to shame, and have no rest of body, nor perfect contentment of mind. On the other side, we are assured, that in the next life our reward is great, our repose without trouble, and our comfort without cross. Our tears shall be turned into triumph, our disgrace into glory, and all our miseries into perfect felicity. Who, therefore, would not rejoice to die quickly, seeing that death is the passage from

this world to the next, from all present aggrivances to all possible happiness? Well may the epicure tremble, who with his life looketh to lose his felicity. Well may the infidel or the unrepentant sinner quake, whose death is the beginning of evil. Those who have had their heaven here, and have made their prison their paradise—those whose belly was their God, and whose appetites their guide, may with reason rue their death, seeing they have no portion in the land of the living. They have sown in sin, and what can they look to reap but misery? Vanity was their traffic, and grief will be their gain. Detestable was their life, and miserable will be their decease. O death, how bitter is thy remembrance to a man that hath planted his peace and contentment in his worldly substance! Miserable indeed is the sinner's decease, but precious in the sight of our Lord is the death of his saints. Here they have their pain, and in heaven they look for their reward. Here they have sown in tears, there they shall reap in joy. Their judge is he for whom they have suffered, and therefore doubtless he will be merciful. Their accusers are made dumb by their former repentance, and therefore cannot be prejudicial. Their conscience is cleared by humble confession, and therefore cannot be fearful. Hope is their staff, to keep them from sliding; righteousness their safe conduct, to protect them from alarm; grace their guide, to keep them from erring. Their wounds and sufferings in God's cause

are testimonies to assure them of comfortable entertainment. Their combats against their own passions are badges of perfection, and will find free access. What can they see in this world to withhold them? They regard not whether the way be green and pleasant, or rough and disagreeable; they weigh not who seeth them, nor what they say of them. Though they be reviled, they stay not to answer; though they be smitten, they stay not to revenge. Their mind is fixed alone on the end in view; if they run not, they win not, and therefore, their only joy is to come soonest to the goal. If they look upon the world, they behold it like the sea, where many, trusting to the waves, are drowned, some are beaten by the billows against the rocks, while others labour to reach the shores by help of some fragment of the broken ship. If they consider the poor, their life is led in such agony, pain, and neediness, that it maketh every one loathe it. If they hold the rich and mighty, their felicity is folly, and their joy is vanity. If they look on potentates, that seem the very flower of mankind, they oftentimes find that they are poor in their riches, abject in their honours, discontented in their delights, miserable in their birth, wicked in their life, and deplorable in their end. Look into the graves:—survey all the emperors, dukes, statesmen, and worthies of former ages, and see who was the master and who the slave; who was the rich, and who the poor; discover, if thou canst, the captive from the king, the strong from the weak.

Our life is like the print of a cloud in the air, like a mist dissolved in the sun, like the passing of a shadow, like a flower that soon fadeth, like a dry leaf carried with every wind, like a vapour that soon vanishes out of sight. St. Chrysostom calleth it a heavy sleep, fed with false and imaginary dreams; again he calls it a comedy, or rather, in our days, a tragedy, full of transitory shews and disguised passions. St. Gregory Nazianzen calleth it a child's game, who buildeth houses of sand on the shore, which the returning wave washeth away; yea, as Pindar saith, it is no more than the shadow of a shade. It passeth away like the wind; it rideth post like a ship in the sea, that leaveth no print of passage; like a bird in the air, of whose way there remaineth no remembrance; like an arrow that flieth to the mark, whose track the air suddenly closeth up. Whatsoever we do, sit we, stand we, sleep we, or wake we, our ship, saith St. Basil, is always sailing towards our last home. Every day we die, and hourly lose some part of our life; and even while we grow, we decrease. We have lost our infancy, our childhood, our youth and all, till this present day; and this very day death by minutes is secretly purloining from us. This St. Gregory well expresseth, saying, 'our living is a passing through life: for our life, with her increase, diminisheth; and by that always impaireth, whereby it seemeth to profit. Future things are always beginning, present things always ending, and things past quite

dead and done. No armour resisteth, no threatening prevaileth, no entreaty profiteth against the assault of death. If all other perils and chances spare our life, yet time and age will, in the end, consume it. Why, therefore, should we be unwilling to lose that, which cannot be kept? Better it is, since death is nature's necessary wreck, to follow St. Chrysostom's counsel, 'let us make that voluntary, which must needs be of necessity; and let us offer to God as a present, what, of due and debt, we are bound to render. What marvel, if when the wind bloweth, the leaf fall; if when the day appeareth, the night end?'—'Our life,' saith the same saint, 'was a shadow, and it passed; it was a smoke, and it vanished; it was a bubble, and it was dissolved; it was a spider's web, and it was shaken asunder.' If any thing makes death alarming, it is the want of the consideration of it. The old have it right before them, the young hard behind them, all men daily over them, and yet we forget it. Familiarity with lions taketh away the fear of them; the being used to tempests giveth heart and courage to endure them; and, in war, the seeing so many hourly bereaved of life, maketh the soldier little or nothing to care for it. If, therefore, we would be out of all fear of death, let us continually remember it. If we use our horse to the race before it run for the prize; if we acquaint ourselves with the weapons before we fight for the victory; much more should we take heed that we come not unprovided to this last combat.

Death, to those that are prepared for it, is very comfortable, and only terrible to those who sleep in sin, and are careless of their end. To such, death is hateful; they are tormented with the pangs of the dying flesh, amazed with the fits and corrosives of the mind, frightened with the terror of that which is to come, and grieved with remorse for that which is past. They are wrung with the gnawing of a guilty conscience, discomfited with the rigour of a severe judge, and annoyed with the thought of a loathsome sepulchre: and thus, though death of itself be not bitter, yet is it bitter to the wicked. It is the fear of death that maketh it terrible; and, indeed, it is not so grievous to die, as to live in perpetual fear and expectation of death. For he that feareth God shall make a good end, and in the day of his decease he shall be blessed. *Happy are the dead that die in the Lord; from henceforth, saith the Spirit, they shall rest from their labours, for their works do follow them.* The noon-day light shall rise unto them in the evening of their life; and when they think themselves quite confounded, they shall shine as bright as the star of morning. Their life was a study how to die well, and they knew, that, when death passed through the veins of life, it lost the bitterness of death, and took the taste and sweetness of life. The horror of the grave doth nothing move them, because they do but sow therein a carnal and corruptible body, to meet the same in the resurrection, spiritual and incorruptible. Can we for

shame desire to be honoured with eternal rewards, that can so hardly be entreated to come and receive them ; or to enjoy for ever the glory of his presence, that shun the gate whereby we must enter into it ? If one enemy sometimes findeth mercy at another enemy's hand, where he least looked for it, why should a dutiful child fear to go to his heavenly father ; a penitent soul, to his sweet Saviour ; an obedient member to be joined with his head ? If he came into this world to redeem us, why should we doubt but at our death he will redeem us, especially if we die for him as he died for us ? He that accepted his enemies, will he reject his friends ? He came hither to purchase us an inheritance, he went from hence to prepare it for us, and when we are to enter into possession, will he exclude us ? Who can imagine, that he who is contented here to be himself our food, and to abase his majesty to enter into our soul, dwelling in this cottage of clay, will not be content in our chiefest need to be our friend, and to advance our departing soul to the comfort of his presence ? Can he, that has been our guide and our guardian all the way, forsake and shake us off at the end of our journey ? No, no ; the eyes of the Lord are upon those that fear him, that he may deliver their souls from death. Let us remember his love in adopting, his truth in promising, and his power in performing, and our fear of death will be soon altered into a desire of the same. He came to open the gates of heaven, and what meant he

but that we should enter in? He came upon earth to invite us to him, and why departed he from earth but to have us follow him? Neither let the violence of death, nor the multitude of torments affright us: we have but one life, and one only can we lose. Goliath was as much hurt by the little stone from David's sling, as Sampson by the weight of a whole house; and all those who stoned Stephen to death, took no more from him, than an ordinary sickness took from Lazarus, and doth daily take from us all.—Were I to attempt to recite the glorious examples of those that have died in a good cause, the number is so great, and their courage so glorious, that it would require a whole treatise by itself. Consider the example of Abel that was cruelly murdered; of Jeremiah that was stoned; Esau that was sawn in sunder; Zachariah that was slain between the temple and the altar. Consider, in the New Testament, the courage of little children that, in their prowess surmounting their age, have in their childish bodies shewn hoary and constant minds, and in the weakness of years have been superior to all the torments of tyrants. Consider the tender and soft virgins who, though timorous by nature and frail by sex, have nevertheless, in God's cause, altered their female, relenting hearts into unfearful and manly valour, and have been better able to endure every outrage, than their enemies to inflict it. Consider the whole multitude and glorious host of martyrs, whose torments have been exqui-

site, bloody, and with all kind of extremity, and yet their minds were undaunted and strong, and their agonies always ended in triumph and victory.

Who is there that, spite of all he can do, may not suffer that by misfortune, which he feareth to suffer in God's cause? Why, therefore, should we fear that which cannot be avoided? The very necessity of death should make us not unwilling to die, and the remembrance of our mortality should make us little fear that which experience sheweth us to be mortal. Live well, and die well, we may; but live long, and not die, we cannot. We should not think our life shortened, when it is well ended. He dieth old enough, that dieth good; and life is better well lost, than ill kept. We go but that way, by which all the world hath gone before us, and all that come after us, shall follow; and at the same instant with us, thousands from all parts of the world shall bear us company. If we be taken away in the flower of our age, how can it be better bestowed than on him that gave it? And all our loss therein is included in this, that being passengers over the sea of life, we had a stronger gale to waft us sooner to our desired port. If we die in this cause, our pitcher is broken over the fountain, where the water is not lost, but only returned from whence it was first taken. How often, for a point of honour, have we been ready to challenge our opponent into the field! How often have we, for our pleasure, used desperate and break-

neck games, thinking it glory to brave death, and a stain to our courage to shew any cowardice in mortal hazards! Well may those words of Tertullian be objected against us, 'Why grudgeth a man to suffer for his remedy, that which he grudgeth not to suffer out of vanity?' Can it displease him to be killed to his salvation, whom it displeaseth not to be killed to his perdition? And will he loathe to receive the medicine, who was so eager to let in the poison? Now ought we to renew our wonted courage, and be as careless of our lives as we then were, when we would have spilt them out of vanity. In sin and heresy we were venturous and bold, or rather rash and presumptuous. When we were unarmed, naked, and without force, no terror could daunt or cool our audacity; and now that we are reclaimed to virtue and true religion, fortified with God's grace, sheltered under God's power, protected by his angels, and fortified by the prayers, sacraments, and good works of the Church, shall we be more fearful than we were without all these succours? We are allotted to a glorious combat, in which the mere comfort of having such honourable lookers-on were enough to hearten us against all affronts. When we fight in the cause of our faith, God and his Angels behold us, and Christ looketh on. What a glorious dignity is it, how great a felicity, to fight under God as the ruler, and to be crowned by Christ as the judge of the combat! Let honour to the constant, and remorse to the

lapsed, be a spur to the combat. Let our adversaries, therefore, load us with the infamous titles of traitors and rebels ; let them draw us upon hurdles, hang us, embowel us alive, mangle us, and set our quarters upon their gates, to be meat for the birds of the air, as they handle traitors ; we will answer them as the Christians of former persecutions have done :—‘ Such is the manner of our victory ; such the conqueror’s garment ; in such chariots do we triumph!’

You have had toil enough in the servitude of Egypt ; you have wandered long enough in the desert, in continual battle with your enemies, and those of God ; and now, if you die, the time is come for you to taste repose, and enjoy the felicity of the land of promise. You have been on mount Sanai, when thunders began to be heard, lightnings to flash, and a thick dark cloud to cover the mount : now you are called unto mount Thabor, where, enjoying his glory whose terror you have already sustained, you may say with St. Peter, *It is good for us to be here!* Remember how often you have been with Christ at his supper ; with reason he now requireth that you should follow him to Gethsemane, not to sleep with St. Peter, but with himself to sweat blood. Your life is a warfare, your weapon patience, your captain Christ, your standard the cross. Now is the alarm sounded, and the war proclaimed ; die you must, to win the field. Neither is this news to you, that have professed to be Christ’s

champions, seeing that the Apostles, and all the most famous soldiers since their time, have esteemed this the most sovereign victory—by yielding to subdue, by dying to revive, by shedding their blood and losing their life, to win the goal of eternal felicity. Elijah must not think much to let fall the worthless mantle of his flesh, to be carried to Paradise in a fiery chariot. Gideon may willingly break his earthen pitchers, to shew the light that must confound his enemies. Joseph must leave his cloak in the harlot's hands, rather than consent to her lewd enticements. Your daily prayer has been, '*Let thy kingdom come.*' now is the time arrived to obtain your petition. The kingdom of this world is in the wane, and the age thereof beginneth to threaten ruin. The forerunners of Anti-Christ are in the pride of their course, and therefore, St. Cyprian saith, '*We that see already great miseries, and foresee greater to be at hand, let us account it time happily gained, if we may quickly depart, to prevent their coming.*' Neither is the winter so full of showers to water the earth, nor summer so hot to ripen the corn, nor the spring so temperate to prosper young growth, nor autumn so full of ripe fruit, as heretofore it hath been. The hills, tired with digging, yield not such store of marble; the wearied mines yield not so great a quantity of precious metals; the scant veins wax daily shorter. On the sea decayeth the mariner, in the tents the soldier, innocency in courts, justice in judgments, agree-

ment in friendships, cunning in arts, and discipline in manners. Finally, every thing is so impaired, and so fast falleth away, that happy he may be who dieth quickly, lest he be oppressed with the ruins of the dying world. Let those make account of this life, who esteem the world their friend, and are not only in the world, but also of it. As for you, the world hateth you, and therefore how can you love it, being hated of it? We are but pilgrims and strangers, and how can we but willingly embrace the death that restoreth us to Paradise and the kingdom of heaven? Our country is heaven; our parents, the patriarchs; why do we not hasten to come speedily to our country, and to salute these parents? There a great multitude of our friends expect us, a vast number desireth our coming—secure and certain of their own salvation, and only solicitous for ours. What unspeakable comfort is it, to come to the sight and embraces of them! How great is the contentment of their abode, without fear of dying, and with eternity of living! There is the glorious choir of apostles, the company of rejoicing prophets, the innumerable multitude of martyrs, crowned for the victory over their passions, and for their bloody frays. There are the troops of fair virgins, who, by the virtue of chastity, have subdued the rebellions of flesh and blood. There is the centre of our repose, the only seat of un-failing security. Seeing, therefore, there is so little cause either to love life, or to fear death, and so great

motives to lament that our sojourning is prolonged, and our decease adjourned ; let not their threatening appal us, who can only kill the body, but have not power over the soul ; whose greatest spite worketh our profit, and who, when they think they have given us and our cause the deepest wound, have most grievously wounded themselves, and procured our higher advancement. They think, by killing Abel, that Cain's sacrifice will be accepted ; not remembering that Abel's blood cryeth aloud against them. By pursuing Elijah with many soldiers, they think to prevail ; not remembering that the fire will fall from heaven in his defence. They think, by stoning Stephen, to have ended their greatest enemy ; not considering that his chief persecutor will succeed in his stead, and be unto them a more victorious adversary. Let them still continue their rage ; let them think themselves wise in their ignorant folly ; but let us, though we lament at their offence, yet rejoice in our felicity.

What greater pre-eminence is there in the Church of God, than that of a martyr ? What more renowned dignity, than to die in this cause of the Catholic faith ? And this crown do our greatest enemies set upon our heads, the glory whereof none can sufficiently know, but such as have proved the same. Yet may we gather, by conjectures, no small part of the greatness of it ; for if we consider it in itself, it is the noblest act of fortitude, death being the hardest thing for man to

overcome. It is also the greatest point of charity, by God's own testimony, who said, *Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his brother.* It is the principal act of obedience, commended so highly in Christ, who *became obedient, even unto death.*—The baptism of blood surpasseth that of water.—Baptism is the cloud by which Moses guided the people of God, and shrouded them in the desert : martyrdom is the river Jordan, through which Joshua leadeth them to the land of promise. Baptism apparelleth Mordecai in the attire of kings, yet still leaving him a subject : martyrdom, with the robes, also investeth him with the reality, of the royal dignity.—No Haman is so foul a leper, that this water of the Jordan cannot cure ; no man so blind, but that the washing in this pool of Siloah can restore to sight ; no disease so incurable, but what this pool of Probaticea can perfectly heal.—It accomplisheth the labours of the virtuous, and satisfieth for the sins of the wicked : it is to the former a reward, and to the latter a remedy. For these causes doth the Church call the dying-days of the martyrs their birth-days ; for though we are born again by baptism, we are not yet come to a full birth and perfect healing. ' We therefore,' saith Origen, ' do not celebrate the day of the Saints' nativity, which is an entrance of all griefs and molestations ; but the day of their death, which is a riddance of their sorrow, and a farewell to the assaults of the devil.'—Worthily

are they called birth-days, by which such as were born into the misery and frailty of man, are suddenly born again to the glory of God. For if we call those birth-days, in which, in sin and sorrow, we are born into this world; more justly may they be called birth-days, wherein, from corruptible light, they come into the brightness of the spiritual world, and the sons of men ascend to the adoption of a heavenly father. When the vine is pruned, it spreadeth out the branches in greater pride, and is the more filled with fair clusters. The injury it seemeth to suffer, returneth to the greater increase. It is beneficial to the field to set on fire the stubble, that the ground may be more fertile and abundant.

We find, by experience, that whosoever suffereth, though he suffer for an offence, is pitied; and misery, though deserved, cannot but naturally breed remorse and tenderness in the beholders. But when such men as are of innocent behaviour, of virtuous conversation, learned and grave persons, shall offer themselves with fortitude to bear every extremity, shall rejoice when they are tormented, smile when they are dismembered, and go to death as they would to a banquet;—when such as neither want dignities to withdraw them, nor friends nor families to pull them back, nor powerful enemies to affright them, shall be ready to change their dignity for disgrace, to forsake their friends, and give themselves into the hands of their

mortal foes, only for the defence of their conscience; men must needs say, as they did in St. Cyprian's time, 'It is a thing worthy to be known; it is a virtue that deserveth deep consideration, for which a man is content to suffer death.' They want no means to search out the truth, having both heard and read all that can be said on either side. They want not wit and judgment to discern the good from the bad, being persons known to be of deep insight and discretion. They can have no pleasure in pains, nor any temporal allurements to move them to undergo such great misery; yea, they have many delights, honours, and preferments to withdraw them from it; and with altering opinion, and speaking a word, might easily avoid it. Certain, therefore, it is, that they find it necessary to do this, and that their soul lieth upon it, or else flesh and blood could never bear such heavy calamities.

But, if there are bitternesses that arise in the conflict, there are also consolations to those that suffer; and it is not the least among them, that their death raiseth many from death, and their patience maketh every one inquisitive about their religion: for every one seeing such constancy, is cast in some scruple, and waxeth inquisitive as to the cause we maintain; and when he knoweth the truth, he straight embraceth it. Thus, the more exquisite the rigours our enemies exercise against us, the greater is the allurements of others to our religion.

Oh, how unhappy are they that, for the saving of their goods, for credit, temporal authority, or such worldly respects, forsake these glorious and divine honours, and purchase a most lamentable and ignominious stile ! Indeed, what are they but the spoils of Christians, the weeds of the Church, and the ruins of religion ? Many of them, yielding before the battle, and foiled before the combat, have not left themselves so much as this excuse—that they went to church unwillingly. They offer themselves voluntarily ; they run wittingly to their own ruin, and seem rather to embrace a thing before desired, than to yield to an occasion that they could fain have avoided. And did not your feet stumble, your eyes grow dim, your hearts quake, and your bodies tremble, when you came into the polluted synagogue ? Could the servant of Christ abide in that place ? Could he renounce Christ, and do homage to his enemy, whom he had renounced in baptism ? Could you come hither, to offer your prayers unto God ? and could Catholic ears sustain, without glowing, the outrage, reproach, and railing speeches uttered against our true mother, the Catholic Church ? Will you seek to shelter yourselves under the pretext, that you are in mind Catholics, and that you come to church only to obey the law ? Will you say that going to church is not a spiritual, but a civil action ? Can any thing be more against all sense and reason, seeing that it is the very principal sign of spi-

ritual duty, to be present at that, whereby religion is chiefly professed ; especially when this presence is commanded by a law, the known meaning whereof is to force men to the profession of a false belief? I omit the scandal which you give, in confirming the obstinacy of misbelievers ; in weakening and overthrowing the faith of the faint-hearted and wavering. I omit what advantage you give to the enemies of the Church, to triumph over her as overcome, and to boast of you, if not as children or voluntaries, at least as of pressed men, and slaves of their synagogues. I omit the danger of infection, by their contagious speeches, that creep and corrode like a canker. To neglect and not consider this, is wilful blindness ; to consider and not fear it, is a tempting of God, and the greatest presumption ; to fear and not to avoid it, is perverse obstinacy, and impiety towards your own souls.

I wish not to expose your contempt of the canon of the Apostles, of the Council of Laodicea, and divers others, forbidding to resort to the prayers or conventicles of heretics ; of the example of all antiquity, condemning the same ; of the verdict and common consent of the profoundest writers in Christendom ; and in particular, of the most choice men in the Tridentine Council, who, after long sifting and examining this point, in the end found it altogether unlawful, and avouched it better to suffer all kind of torments, than to yield to it. Yea, and although they were desired

not to make this a public degree, in respect to the troubles that might arise to the Catholics in England, in whose behalf the question of going to church was proposed; yet the Legate, and the aforesaid Fathers, gave this answer,—that they would have this resolution no less accounted of, than if it were the censure of the whole Council.

Let us remind you also, that divers heretics will be witnesses against you in the day of judgment, who with letters and set treatises, have, by many scriptures, proved it to be unlawful, for one of a true belief, to frequent or repair to the service or sacraments of a false church. Their arguments and actions in this matter will so much the more condemn you, inasmuch as they were more religious in an erroneous and untrue, than you in a sincere and undoubted faith. He who desires to peruse their opinion in this matter more at large, let him read the treatise of John Calvin, regarding the avoiding those superstitions which repugn the sincere profession of faith: and his book which he wrote against those false Nicodemites, that came to Christ by night. Mr. Fox also recordeth divers letters from Bradford, Hallier, and others, that wholly approve the said assertion. And, albeit their reasons were misapplied in the particular church to which they proved it unlawful to resort, yet are they very sufficient and forcible to prove, that the repairing to a false church is most sinful and damnable. And therefore, consider

in yourselves what wilful blindness you are in, that maintain a point which not only Catholics, but even the very heretics themselves, that carried any shew of form and conscience in their religion, detested as most prejudicial to the truth, offensive to God, and pernicious to yourselves.

And, not contented to sacrifice your own souls, your faith, and your portion in heaven, you carry also with you your dear innocents, and force your children to the like impiety, as though it were not enough for you to perish alone. Will they not in the day of judgment cry out against you? Will they not accuse you of having revived the old sin of the Jews and Gentiles, in offering up your sons and daughters to Moloch? Oh, how cruel and unnatural a thing do you commit, in thus training-up your little-ones to destruction! You gave them a temporal life, and you deprive them of a spiritual: you gave life to their body, and you prove the bane of their soul: you brought them forth for heaven, and you guide them the way to hell. Was this the fruit of your painful labour in bringing them into the world, that they should curse the father that begat them, and the mother that brought them forth? that they should wish that the womb had been their grave, and the hour of their birth, that of their decease? O how much better did that good mother of the Machabees act, who rather exhorted her children to martyrdom, than to offend by saving their lives! How much better did

St. Felicitas, who, in the time of persecution, being as desirous of sending her children before her to heaven, as other mothers are to leave theirs after them here on earth, confirmed those in spirit whose bodies she had borne; and was their mother in their birth to God, as well as in their nativity to the world.

Oh, blindness and dulness of heart! and had you rather have God than man for your enemy? Oh, what a miserable exchange do you make! With Esau you sell your heavenly inheritance for a mess of pottage; barter your soul, which cost no less than the life and blood of God himself, for the short use of a few riches; exchange God and all he is worth, for the small revenue of a few years! Nor can the fear of temporal loss excuse you. God gave you all you have; you must not be unwilling to forego it for him. It is folly to think that God can except as an excuse, the loss of a little pelf, when the soul, which he bought with his dear blood, is lost for the saving of it. Christ saith, that whosoever loveth father, mother, riches, wife or children, more than him, is not worthy of him; that whoso gathereth not with him, scattereth; that he who is not with him, is against him; that such as deny him here, shall be denied by him in the next world; and that whosoever confesseth him here, shall be acknowledged by him in the day of judgment. Now all these sayings being of equal truth and credit, then, as St. Cyprian saith, ' If the faith that conquereth be crowned,

the perfidiousness that betrayeth must be chastised.' Whosoever therefore hath fallen, let him now rise. All the delights you have to leave, will be so many sacrifices to appease God. You may turn your vices into so many virtues, employing all that you abused to the contempt of God in your wickedness, to serve him in your repentance. Fly out of the midst of Babylon, and save your souls. Fly unto the city of refuge, where you may do penance for that which is past, obtain grace for the present, and expect the comforts that are to come. Let not the burden of your conscience withhold you ; for where sin hath much abounded, there aboundeth also God's grace in repentance. Let not the fear of difficulties and rigour dismay you. If you believe not words, believe examples. How many have you in prisons, both by nature and custom very dainty and tender. Nothing is impossible to true believers ; nothing sharp to true lovers ; nothing hard to the meek ; nothing rough to the humble, to whom grace affordeth help, and whose devout obedience easeth the weight of God's commandments. Remember what judgments God hath shewn towards those that denied him. Neither need I recite the particular fate of individuals, seeing that in the manifold ruins and revolts through the world, the punishment of sin is as various, as the multitude of offenders is great. Let every one of you consider as well what he himself hath deserved, as what others have suffered. Let no man flatter himself

in the adjourning of his chastisement: yea, let him rather fear the more, seeing God reserveth his sin to an eternal revenge. Be not moved with their example, who, either through reckless error, or dulness of faith, run headlong forward in their wilful blindness. Go not you to perdition with them for company's sake. Join your prayers with us, who daily pray for you. Be not slack in your own cause, to which so many cooperate; and laugh not in your misery, which so many rue. God is ready again to receive you; he openeth unto you the gate of his mercy; he calleth you; he inviteth you with fatherly pity. Oh, ingratitude! why do you hesitate—why stand irresolute? What preventeth your coming? Your soul lieth upon it; your eternal weal or woe is in the balance. Take mercy while you may; enter while you have access, lest the gate be shut; lest your knocking be not heard, and this be your last answer, *I know you not.*

And you, on the other side, most constant confessors! continue you your course; persevere in the enterprize you have commenced; let not the example of those that fall make you the weaker. If they had been of us, they would have staid with us. We should rejoice when the wolves are separated from the sheep of Christ. How can the darkness agree with the light, the calm with the tempest! Let no man imagine that the good go out of the church. The wind carrieth not away the wheat, neither doth the storm overthrow the trees that

are strong rooted ; the light chaff is tossed with every wind, and the weak trees with every blast are blown down. ' When the sun shineth,' saith St. Augustine, ' is it the palm that withereth, or the cedar that is parched ? Is it not rather the grass that suddenly fadeth with the heat ?' Though you see some Saul, from a prophet, to become a persecutor of prophets ; some Judas, from Christ's apostle, to become his betrayer ; some Nicholas from a deacon, to become an arch-heretic : yet be not you moved. What marvel when the beam is severed from the sun, if it lose the light ; when the bough is cut off from the tree, if it wither ; or if the brook, being parted from the head-spring, dry quite up ? This cannot in any way prejudice, but rather profit the church, whose purity is increased, when it riddeth itself of such corruption. ' For,' as St. Gregory saith, ' no man doth more harm in the church, than he who, living perversely, yet beareth the name and degree of piety ; for such a one no one presumeth to reprove, but a great deal more apparently imputeth the fault to evil example, than, for reverence of the order, to the offender, who must have his honour.' Better, therefore, it is that those should go out of it, who, within it, are a disgrace unto it, and, without it, honour it ; inasmuch as it is a soil that cannot brook such rank and poisoned weeds. Contemn not the pearl, because the swine trample upon it ; despise not the light, because evil men hate it ; and think not worse of the church, if the wicked

forsake it. It is no wonder to see some tares in God's field, as long as the enemy is permitted to sow it. Look you upon the wheat : for the angels shall bind the tares in bundles, and throw them into inextinguishable fire. The good man of the house has not yet sorted his vessels, nor severed those of reproach from those of honour. If when he taketh his time, he will judge justice itself, how much more their impiety ! In the meanwhile, though some of the bad sever themselves from Christ's body, we should rather think it a happiness than a novelty. For so hath it always been heretofore, and so will it always be hereafter, until such time as the angels shall come and sever the bad from the just, and allot every one to his deserved home.

It is better for us to be humble with the meek, than to divide spoils with the proud. It were a great folly to buy the advancement of this world with loss of eternal joy, only for fair shew and flattering delights ; not weighing their slipperiness, their vanity and their danger. If worldly men think pleasure so great a felicity as to take it at this rate, with the loss of their souls, yet let not us imitate or approve of their bargain. Who is so mad as to admire his might, who is only mighty to do himself mischief ? Who would praise his swiftness, that runneth hastily to his own perdition ; or marvel at his high ascent, whose mounting is only to his greater ruin ? Such felicity is much like theirs, that having taken the poisoned juice of certain herbs, are

by the operation thereof brought to die with excessive laughter. 'And what felicity is it,' saith St. Chrysostom, 'for one sick of the dropsy, to have choice of pleasant drinks, which, the more they allure him to drink, the more they forward him towards his death?' Let these triumph in their imaginary happiness and true misery; let them rejoice in their wickedness, and glory in their destruction. Let us comfort ourselves in our sufferings and afflictions for Christ, which we know will advance us to an eternal reward, and to those glorious titles, which undoubtedly are due to martyrs in our cause.

How great the glory due unto martyrs in the next world, may be easily conjectured; for if their very dead bodies here on earth are so highly honoured, and had in such estimation, what may we think of the majesty of their souls in heaven? For first, all the comforts, joys, and delights that are here scattered in divers creatures and countries; all the beauty and comeliness that any worldly thing possesses, shall be there united and joined together in every saint, without any of those imperfections wherewithal they are here copied. We see how much any one pleasure is prized: some will venture on any peril to please their taste, others to content their eye, many to satisfy their ear, infinite to fulfil their sensuality; and yet what is all the contentment of these senses, but shadows and dreams of delight, neither sufficient to quench sorrow, nor able to prolong joy; neither won without hazard, ended without

fear, nor lost without grief? But, in heaven, all the senses are evermore, and without fear of loss, fully satisfied with their several pleasures, and drowned in the depth of unspeakable delight. In the sight of God we shall have the fullness of felicity, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived. The understanding shall be without error, the memory without forgetfulness, the will without evil desires, the thoughts pure and comfortable, the affections subordinate and measurable, all the passions governed by reason, and settled in a perfect calm. No fear shall affright us, no presumption puff us up, no love disquiet us, no anger incense us, no envy gnaw us, no pusillanimity quail us; but courage, constancy, charity, peace, and security shall replenish and establish our hearts. It shall be lawful to love whatsoever we like, and whatsoever we love, we shall perfectly enjoy; and not only shall we love, but be also loved, and as much as we ourselves can desire. Our knowledge shall comprise whatsoever may be to our comfort, not only one thing at once, but all things together: so that the multitude of the objects shall delight us, not confound us; fill our desire of knowledge, not hinder the perfect intelligence of them all. And as for our bodies, they shall be of most comely and gracious features; beauteous and lovely; healthful, without any weakness; always in youth, and in the flower and prime of their force; personable of shape, as swift as our thought, subject to

no penal impression, incapable of grief, as clear as chrystal, as bright as the sun, and as able to find passage through heaven, earth, or any other material impediment, as in the liquid and yielding air.

Our sight shall feed on the most glorious and eyesome majesty of the place, and on the glory and beauty of the company ; the ear shall always be solaced with the most sweet and angelical harmony ; in fine, every sense shall have its several and peculiar delight. There, plenty cloyeth not ; there, gaiety offendeth not ; there, continuance annoyeth not ; there, hunger is satisfied, yet not diminished ; there, desire is accomplished, but not dulled. Neither is their joy contained in their own persons alone ; for each by loving others as himself, delighteth in the happiness of others, as much as in his own, and what he hath not in himself, he possesses in the society he is in : so that he hath as many joys as he has fellows in felicity ; and the several joys of all are of as great comfort to every saint, as his own peculiar delights ; and because all love God more than themselves, they take more pleasure in his bliss than of all their joys beside.

O, how glorious will it be for God's martyrs, when, in security, they shall recount their conquests over Satan ! When they shall enjoy an eternal triumph, for a short victory ! When they shall look down upon the glorious spoils of converted souls, and shall see their enemies either confounded by God's justice, or re-

claimed by his mercy! What a singular joy shall they conceive, by considering the torments they have avoided, which those who fell are condemned to endure, and the glorious change they shall find in themselves! For their prison, they shall have a Paradise of delights; for their chains, ornaments of glory; for their reproach and shame, honour and reverence; for the railing against them, everlasting praise and titles of renown: and, from the rage of enemies, they shall pass to the league of saints. O how glorious will the scars of their wounds, and the tokens of their agonies, then shew! which, as St. Augustine saith, they shall bear about them as perpetual testimonies of their victories. For there shall be in them no deformity, but dignity; and a certain splendour shall shine through their body, yet not of the body, but of virtue. Consider now, oh you that persecute us, what the harm is you do us; yea, to what titles and glory you prefer us, by putting us to death! You see, that when you condemn us, you crown us; when you spoil us, you enrich us. Our number increaseth as often as you reap us: the blood of the Christian is the seed of the Church. The more the children of Israel were oppressed, the more were they increased; and so it is with the Catholics. The resurrection of immortality sprung more fertile, when it was sown in the blood of the martyrs. Our palms, with weight, grow the higher; our flame, by suppressing, waxeth the hotter; and our spice, by pounding, yieldeth

the better scent. When you persecute us, you till and manure the ground of the Church. You think to root out the corn, and you do but sow the seed that will spring with a more plentiful harvest. You think it is the Seminary Priest that enlargeth the Catholic faith; whereas, indeed, yourselves make the chief Seminary, from which the Catholics spread. Though their voice doth avail something, yet, in comparison, it doth but little. The voice of the blood of your murdered brethren crieth out against you, and this voice it is that so forcibly prevaileth. They announce that which books can teach them; but, as Tertullian saith, their words make not so many disciples, as christians do, who teach by their deeds. Our constancy forceth men to look more into our cause, and then by seeking they find, by finding they believe, and, believing, are as ready to die as we ourselves. Our prisons preach; our punishments convert; and even our dead corpses are able to confound heresy. You have laboured to suppress us these twenty-six years, and yet of our ashes spring others; and our dead bones, as Ezekiel prophesied, *are come to be a huge army*. With the thunders of your rage, both the cloud of error is dissolved, the hidden light of truth displayed, and the earth watered with profitable showers, to the ripening of the corn of God.

Go on, ye good magistrates! so much the better in the eyes of the people, if you sacrifice the Catholics to their fury! Rack us, torture us, condemn us to death:

your injustice is but a proof of our faith. You open us the way to our desired felicity ; you give us an absolute acquittance from endless misery ; you wash away the uncleanness of our iniquity, and deliver us from the assaults of our infernal enemy. You will, peradventure, say—Why then complain you of our persecution, if you rather desire to suffer, seeing that you should love those by whom your desire is fulfilled ? If we pleasure you, thank us ; and if we be so beneficial unto you, we cannot but do well in continuing our cause.—In this we answer you with our Saviour's words, who said, *With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you* : and yet it stood well with his other words when he said,—*Woe be unto him by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed ; better had it been for him if he had never been born.* Being soldiers by profession, we are glad to have so just an occasion to fight in defence of the truth ; and yet heartily sorry to see you bid us battle, by impugning and persecuting the same. Howsoever it go with us, we are sure of the victory ; for, if we have the upper hand, we vanquish Satan, and chase him out of his haunts, to the confusion of heresy ; and if we be oppressed and murdered for our faith, then do we win a heavenly reward to ourselves, and a confirmation of our religion to our posterity. If God permit you, we refuse not to endure and stay his pleasure ; if he will, he is able to help us ; if he will not, he will make us able to sustain your rage. If it please him, the frogs,

the gnats, the flies, the locusts, can become armies strong enough to prevent you from molesting us, as they did Pharaoh from molesting the people of Israel ; but, if he think it better for us to have the number of our brethren made up before he revenge our injuries, we will content ourselves with his divine appointment. It were no delight to us, to see you in the misery that we ourselves desire to be rid of. Your punishment could not profit us ; we are not so envious of your prosperity, as to desire your overthrow. For your hatred, we render good-will ; for your ill-treatment, prayer ; and we would willingly purchase your salvation with our dearest blood. But, how well soever we are affected towards you, take heed that the earth which receiveth our blood, cry not out against you, agreeably to that saying—*The voice of thy brother's blood crieth out of the earth !* Yet for ourselves, we from our hearts forgive your injuries towards us, and only pity your abuse of God's benefits ; that, for his favors towards you, you should persecute his flock, and hinder the course of his religion ; yea, endeavour to abolish the name of the Catholic Church. Alas ! your labour is in vain ; but incalculable your offence. The spouse of Christ cannot play the adulteress ; she is undefiled and chaste ; she knoweth but one house, and, with unstained integrity, keepeth the sanctity of one only chamber. And we doubt not, but that God will give us grace to be loyal and true children to so pure and chaste a mother ;

and rather, if we had them, lay down many lives, than degenerate from the profession of our faith. We are children of her blood ; with her milk we are fostered ; with her spirit we are quickened. She preserveth us for God, and she assigneth to a kingdom the offspring that she has brought forth. She is a vessel of safety : howsoever the sea rage, or the winds beat ; how much soever she be tossed amongst the waves, doubtless sink she cannot, having him at the helm, of whom it is said, that *The winds and the sea obey him.*

Now is the time in which many of our forefathers desired to live—a time when they might not only profit the Church by the example of their life, and the virtue of their preaching, but also—and how much did they desire it!—by the effusion of their blood. When England was Catholic, she had many glorious confessors ; it is for the honour and benefit of our country that it should be well stored with a number of martyrs ; and we have now, God be thanked ! such martyr-makers in authority, as mean, if they have their will, to make saints enough to furnish all our churches with treasure, when it shall please God to restore them to their true honours ; and doubt not but either they, or their posterity, shall see the very prisons of execution become places of reverence and devotion ; and the scattered bones of those that in this cause have suffered, though now thought unworthy of christian burial, then shined in gold, and held in the highest respect.

Let us in, the mean time, profit by so favourable an occasion of preferment in the court of God, and be as careful, in this age, to aspire to the dignity of watering God's church with our blood, as our forefathers were to guide it, and further it, by their virtuous example, and by the glory of their good works. The kingdom of heaven, saith St. Augustine, requireth no other price but thyself. It is worth all thou art: give thyself, and thou shalt have it. Oh, thrice happy are you that are now in the last step to this glory! Joy in your happiness, and pray that God may accept us also, and promote us to the like comfort; always remembering with yourselves, *that this light and momentary tribulation will work in you an eternal weight of glory; and confirming yourselves with these comfortable words, Whether we live unto our Lord, we live; whether we die unto our Lord, we die; whether we live or die, our Lord's we are.*

Finally, to conclude with the words of St. Bernard, 'What now remaineth, my dearest, but that you be warned of perseverance, which alone ensures renown to the man, and reward to his virtues?'—For, without perseverance, neither does the champion obtain the conquest, nor the conqueror his crown. The accomplishing of virtue, is the virtue of courage; she is the nurse to our merits, and the mediatrice to our need. She is the sister of patience, the daughter of constancy, and the lover of peace; she is the knot of

friendship, the band of agreement, and the bulwark of godliness. Take away perseverance, and no service hath any value ; no good turn any thanks ; no prowess any praise. In fine, not *he who beginneth, but he who persevereth unto the end, shall be saved.*

From One that reverenceth your prisons,
Beareth most dutiful affection to your persons,
And humbly craveth part of your prayers,

R. S.

In silence and hope shall be our strength.

FINIS.

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CONTENTS.



	Page.
<i>Preface, by the Editor</i>	87
<i>Dedication</i>	iii
<i>To the Reader</i>	vii
<i>Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears</i>	11
<i>To the Reader</i>	87
<i>The Triumphs over Death; a Consolatory Epistle for afflicted Minds, in the Effects of dying Friends, &c.</i>	89
<i>An Epistle of Comfort to the Reverend Priests, &c. restrained in durance for the Catholic Faith..</i>	125

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